Distinctive Doctrines and Usages

OF THE

Evangelical Lutheran Church

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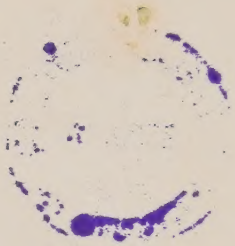

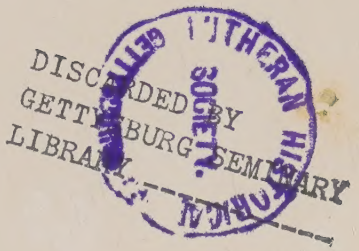
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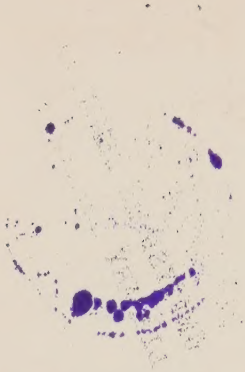

14-20381

The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages

OF THE GENERAL BODIES OF THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES

FOURTH EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

PHILADELPHIA, PA.:
THE LUTHERAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

THE former volume of "DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES AND USAGES" was published more than twenty years ago. It was favorably received by the Lutheran Church in America, and passed through three editions. Its purpose was to give in brief compass the history, doctrinal teachings, and valuable statistics of a number of the largest Lutheran Bodies in this country. Some of its material has long since been out of date, and, therefore, misleading to present readers.

This new volume is in reality more than an edition of the old one. Only one article stands as in the former editions, while four are thoroughly revised, one entirely rewritten, and four new ones added. The present work more than fills to-day the place the old one filled when it was given to the Church. It is not a book of statistics or of creedal statements merely. It is rather a history of the rise and progress of the Church of the Reformation in America, from its beginning to the present time. It furnishes all Lutherans reliable information with respect to the Bodies herein represented.

These writers speak for themselves. But they

also speak for their respective General Bodies. They have been selected to do this work because of their standing in their own Synods. They are men of recognized piety and scholarly attainments. They write with authority, for they are familiar with the history of our entire Church, and especially of that particular branch to which each belongs.

A perusal of the volume will reveal the fact that there is no attempt to shade off doctrinal and practical differences. There have been differences, and they still exist. The authors, with customary Lutheran frankness, seek to be absolutely true to the historical development of their portion of the Lutheran household, believing that by this method alone will we come to understand each other better. We may not be able to see eye to eye with our brethren, but we must and do respect their convictions, and are encouraged by the recital of their worthy achievements.

It is with a sense of genuine pleasure that we offer this volume to our beloved Church. We believe we are justified in the hope that its appearance will be very generally welcomed.

And shall we not devoutly pray that, as the stories of the life and works of our several Lutheran Bodies are here brought together and bound up in one volume, so also shall these Bodies themselves gradually be drawn closer to one another, until they become a unit in name and faith and practical endeavor?

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The Joint Synod of Ohio

By REV. PROF. M. LOY, D. D.

IN the early years of the present century a few self-denying Lutheran ministers, imbued with the true missionary spirit, crossed the Allegheny Mountains to break the bread of life to their brethren scattered in the Western wilds. Feeling the need of mutual counsel and encouragement, the little company in 1812 formed a special Conference, which subsequently developed into the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Ohio and Adjacent States. As such it was organized in 1818 with 15 ministers and about 3500 communicants. The members encountered many difficulties, but by the blessing of God upon their zealous labors their numbers increased and their work prospered. In course of time it was deemed necessary to divide the Synod into districts, of which there are now twelve. These hold meetings annually, while every two years they all meet in joint convention. The whole body is usually called the Joint Synod of Ohio, which now numbers 612 ministers, 1160 congregations and missions and 135,000 communicant members.

From the beginning the pastors and congregations thus united were intent on preserving and

propagating the pure Lutheran faith, as with their limited opportunities they were able to apprehend and maintain it, and many were their conflicts with men who endeavored to lead their people astray by teaching otherwise than God's Word teaches. The Confessions of the Church were held in high esteem, and appeals to them were frequent, although it was not until 1847 that the symbolical books were formally declared to be the confessional basis of Synod, and all candidates for the ministry were required to subscribe to them. This position has been firmly maintained until the present hour, and in this all that is distinctive of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States has its root and its explanation. In pursuance of her settled purpose by the grace of her Lord to be found faithful to the pure gospel as He mercifully restored it to His people in the glorious Reformation of the sixteenth century, she will not be enticed or goaded into any position or movement by which the saving truth set forth in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is compromised.

In taking this ground it never entered the minds of our pastors or people to place the Confessions of the Church on an equality with the Holy Scriptures. These are the very word of God in matter and in form. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that

the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. In the Scriptures the Sovereign Lord of all has revealed His righteous and His gracious will in His own words. They are the only source of our knowledge of saving truth, and the only ultimate rule of faith and life. Their decision is final, and from them no appeal can be allowed. The symbols occupy a different place and serve a different purpose. They are not inspired writings. They set forth the faith which men have derived from the Holy Scriptures as the infallible source of saving faith. The Lutheran Church believes and therefore speaks. A doctrine does not become divine by her act of confessing it, and no one is bound to believe it because she confesses it. She confesses it because on the authority of God's Word she believes it, and she asks others to believe it, and then with her to confess it, because the Scriptures teach it. We have the rule "that the Word of God should frame articles of faith, otherwise no one, not even an angel." (*Smalc. Art.* II, 2, 15.) From that rule we can under no circumstances depart, because under no circumstances could we consent to the subject's usurpation of authority which belongs only to the Sovereign. Such usurpation is a mark of the antichrist, whose abominations the Reformation has taught us to shun as an offense against God and man. Our Confessions claim no authority

over the souls of men, but simply declare the faith which lives in our souls and which clings to the word of the living God. "He is the Lord; that is His name; and His glory will He not give to another." But when He speaks His people hear; and when they hear the good tidings which are for all people, how can they otherwise than publish them and bear witness to them for the glory of their Saviour and the good of their fellow-men? Those who have not the faith which the Lutheran Church confesses are not expected to confess it; but she believes, and therefore speaks.

In the nature of things this could not be without effect in her church life and practice. By the grace of God the Christians united in the Evangelical Lutheran Church have known and believed the Evangelical truth which is set forth in their confession; and on that basis her congregations are organized, her ministry is called, and her discipline is administered. It is this faith that gives her the distinctive character by which she is known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church. If some are not prepared to accept her Confessions and enter into fellowship with her on these terms, they are manifestly not prepared to enter into fellowship with her at all. From the beginning she recognized no other terms, and could recognize no other without abandoning her faith and, with it, her life as the Evangelical Church of the Reformation. She

came into being as a visible organization by confessing the truth of the gospel which God in mercy restored to His people through the instrumentality of His chosen servant, and she continues in being by maintaining that blessed truth as the basis upon which her membership stands united.

The Joint Synod of Ohio recognizes the fact that the Evangelical Lutheran Church had her settled faith and her distinctive character when she witnessed her good confession at Augsburg in 1530, as she had declared it before in the universally accepted catechisms prepared by Dr. Luther, and in all her public teaching and preaching. Those who sincerely adopt these confessions as the expression of their faith are in accord with her. Of pastors and teachers it is required indeed that they accept the entire Concordia of 1580. But this is only because a more thorough and a more extensive knowledge of revealed truth is expected of those who are called to teach it, not because agreement in the faith as set forth in the Catechism and the Augustana is insufficient for the unity of the Church. What we are concerned about is the faith once delivered to the saints, which we are in conscience bound to hold fast and perpetuate, and which is the same in all our symbols. Our controversy with those who reject a portion of them has its ground in the conviction that such rejection betrays a dissent from the Evangelical doctrine

set forth in the Augsburg Confession, whose true import and meaning the later symbols develop and defend.

"Unto the true unity of the Church it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrines of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike everywhere: as St. Paul says, 'One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' Eph. iv. 5, 6." (*Augsburg Confession,* Art. VII.) That is the principle to which the Joint Synod is pledged, and by which her practice is governed. She loves the old ways of our fathers, and the beautiful forms in which they worshiped the Lord. She recognizes the benefits of uniformity in the ceremonies and usages of the churches, and heartily seeks to promote it. She desires, even in externals, to walk in the old paths and manifest her historical connection with the old Church. But she never fails to distinguish between that which is necessary and that which is free. What the Lord has not required, the servant of the Lord has no right to require as a condition of membership in His Church. He alone is Master, all we are brethren, who have no authority to impose and no obligation to bear any yoke of bondage. Diversity in matters merely human does not interfere with the unity of the Church, because the Lord Himself

has given His people liberty to arrange them as in the varying circumstances of congregations they think best. Ceremonies instituted by men form no part of the service of God, and can never be of divine obligation. "We believe, teach and confess that the Church of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the Church of God; nevertheless, that herein all inconsiderateness and offense should be avoided, and especial care should be taken to exercise forbearance to the weak in faith: 1 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. xiv. 13." (*Form. Conc.*, Part I, ch. x. 4, 5.) Human ordinances are not divine laws. But when the Lord speaks all alike must bow to His authority. What He requires is necessary. From His word there can be no appeal to human thoughts of expediency and human tastes and preferences. In what He teaches and requires there must be agreement among His disciples. And those who are called Lutherans have heard His voice, have believed His Word, and according to His will have confessed their faith in their symbols. Their Confession is the expression of their agreement concerning the doctrine of the Gospel. It contains only what is necessary "unto the true unity of the Church." On this ground they have united, and only on this ground can others unite with them.

The Joint Synod of Ohio, assured that the Evangelical Lutheran Confession sets forth the pure faith of the gospel, diligently teaches it as well as confesses it with the Church of the glorious times of the Reformation, and earnestly maintains the necessity of its acceptance as a condition of reception into her congregations and communion at her altars. Accordingly she teaches her members to bring their children to Christ in Holy Baptism, that they may share the great salvation which He has secured for our whole fallen race, and to recognize the obligation laid upon them to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to this end to maintain parochial schools, that the word of Christ may dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

She does not grow weary of plying the Catechism and inculcating the precious truth unto salvation which it declares in a form as simple as it is profound in contents. She teaches her catechumens to know the Saviour, to confess Him before the world, and to walk worthy of Him who has purchased them with His blood, and called them into His kingdom. She is glad to number them among her communicants when they are ready to make the requisite confession and promise, but not until, by the blessing of God, this end has been accomplished. As the Church is the congregation of believers, she spares no effort to lead those

committed to her instruction to an explicit faith before she leads them to a public confession. She insists on agreement concerning the doctrine of the Gospel in all cases as a condition of fellowship in the Holy Supper, and therefore insists upon the acceptance of the Lutheran Confession. She does this, not because she presumes that every particular visible Church has a divine right to organize on any basis that may be agreed on by the persons concerned, and then to insist on the acceptance of this basis as a condition of membership, simply because these are the original terms of the compact. That would be true of a society that is purely human and pretends to be nothing else. But it is not true of the Christian Church, which is not an association of men for purposes which they have chosen and with means which they have devised according to their own wisdom or pleasure. Men may form societies and lay down their own terms of admission and membership as they think best. But there is no such right to do what men please in the kingdom of Christ. In that He is Lord, and only those who are willingly subject to Him as He speaks in His Word are entitled to a place in it. To be a congregation of believers the members must accept the faith declared in the Gospel, and in order to have unity they must agree in that faith. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye con-

tinue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John viii. 31, 32. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Eph. ii. 19-21. Those who believe in the Saviour are His disciples, and they confess His name, declare His truth, and show forth His praise. The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, "The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the Word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 8-10. By this confession Christians know each other as disciples of the same Lord, and on the ground of this they join together for the accomplishment of His gracious will. These confessing believers are exhorted to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same

thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. i. 10. Christians are such because they believe in the heavenly truth which is revealed for our salvation. That is the one thing needful in church organization. Holding and confessing this, they may, in the exercise of their liberty, arrange as they deem expedient what the Master has not ordained, but left to their own wisdom. Congregations, as visible associations, may make their own regulations in regard to matters of indifference, but they are Christian congregations in virtue of their Christian faith and its confession, not in virtue of their human regulations. There can be no legitimate basis of union in the Church but that which the Lord lays down, and there can be no necessary conditions of membership and fellowship in the Church but those which the Lord prescribes.

The question of union, as the Joint Synod of Ohio sees it, is not one of mere expediency and courtesy. We cannot admit that the Evangelical Lutheran Church erred in her creed, and that from the start she sinned by uniting on that foundation and declining to unite with such as professed a different faith. She was not guilty of making needless divisions by her evangelical confession. She insisted only on the truth which the Scriptures teach and required only what the Lord requires

as conditions of membership. She cannot alter these conditions now, because they are not of her making, and are not subject to her wisdom or her pleasure. They are obligatory upon her and upon all men by the authority of Him who is King in Zion. For this reason we are constrained to stand aloof from all church unions founded on any other basis than that of the truth revealed in God's Word and confessed in our symbols, and from all movements and demonstrations of a unionistic character, participating in which would imply the admission that the distinctive doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are no part of the faith once delivered to the saints, but are merely human opinions, and therefore have no divine right in Christendom, and are not binding upon Christian people. We heartily desire the union of Christians and of churches, but can see neither fidelity nor expediency in a pretence of union where there is no agreement concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The only Scriptural way to labor for union is to labor for unity in the faith and agreement in its confession. That is divinely required and therefore essential.

It is this that has prevented our organic connection even with other bodies that bear the Lutheran name. Of right this name stands for the historic Church of the Reformation with its incomparable Augsburg Confession. But unhappily not all who

adopt the name adopt also that which it implies. Hence it comes that the Joint Synod of Ohio stands alone, notwithstanding that general Lutheran organizations have been formed around her, and notwithstanding her earnest desire that there should be no divisions among us.

There have been, and there still are, some who accept the Augsburg Confession as their own, but who were not and are not willing to declare the faith which it sets forth to be truly and really the one faith of the gospel, which God would have all men to receive, and agreement in which is necessary unto the true unity of the Church. In their own convictions they are in accord with the doctrines there confessed, or at least find no other confession that seems to them a more adequate expression of their beliefs. Many of them love the Lutheran name and its historic associations. But even those among them who defend the distinctive doctrines of our Confession usually regard them as opinions which at most have equal rights with the opinions proclaimed by other denominations, rather than as the truth of God which must be held fast at all hazards and at every cost, because this is the Master's will. In the exercise of what they deem charity, they therefore overlook the requirements of faith. The prevailing spirit among them has accordingly always been that of accommodation to the beliefs and practices of churches that have

gained the ascendency among the American people. Some have even allowed themselves to be largely governed by the thought that what the great mass of professed Christans around them believe and do must be true and right, and that the creed and practice of the Lutheran Church should be shaped accordingly, as if she lived and could live only by their sufferance. Therefore evasive formulas were resorted to in adopting the Confession, and servile concessions were made to popular churches which are not in sympathy with the faith and spirit of the Church of the Reformation. The Joint Synod of Ohio, sincere in her confession of the old faith, could not and cannot, by word or act, accept the consent of other denominations as the test of gospel truth, and could not and cannot form an organic union with a body in which, notwithstanding the Lutheran name, men could make open assaults upon the doctrines confessed in the Catechism and Augsburg Confession without any fear of being called to account and subjected to discipline. These doctrines are taught in God's Word, and agreement concerning them is necessary unto the true unity of the Church, though thousands of professing Christians think proper to dispute them, and think themselves justifiable in setting forth a different creed and organizing churches on a different basis.

Even the formal acceptance of the Lutheran

Confession may leave room for legitimate doubt whether the agreement exists which is necessary for union. Circumstances may be such as to force upon us the inquiry, whether such professed acceptance is meant as implying that Romanists and Reformed parties, secretists and chiliasts, shall not be admitted to our altars and churches. Important differences in this regard between us and others were brought to view in the controversy respecting the so-called "four points."

Convinced from their own publications of the antichristian character and tendency of such associations, the Joint Synod of Ohio declares: "The rule among us must be, and ever remain, that members of secret societies cannot be received as members of our congregations, nor may they continue their membership or be admitted to the Holy Supper an indefinite length of time." The ground of this rule is not merely the appearance of evil that lies in their shunning the light, although the element of secrecy is on this ground a serious objection. It awakens just suspicion, to which a Christian should not willingly make himself subject. But the evil is of a more dire and dangerous nature. When a society, such as that of the Free Masons, Odd Fellows, and those of similar character, inculcates rationalistic principles subversive of Christianity, destroying souls by leading them to trust in another righteousness than that of Christ, and to engage in

another worship than that of the triune God, while at the same time it abuses the sacred oath and teaches and practices a so-called charity that is not in harmony with the gospel, we cannot regard its adherents, whatever their professions or their intentions may be, as in a proper condition for membership in the Christian Church and communion at her altar. They may not all be aware that their societies operate against the truth in Jesus, as many persons are not aware that in their natural state they are children of wrath, and without Christ can do nothing. But this does not change the fact. And it is the Church's calling to teach: where sin is not seen she must expose it, and where the saving truth is not known she must impart it. This our pastors are willing to do with all patience and with all allowance for circumstances; but they are not willing first to receive secretists into church fellowship and afterwards endeavor to do the work necessary to qualify them for it. While all secret societies are not in the same degree in conflict with Christian faith and love, and a difference will therefore be made in dealing with them, they are all objectionable, and the watchman on Zion's walls must warn against them and seek to rescue souls from their evil influence. With those who are willing to do nothing against these antichristian powers, and say nothing while souls committed to their charge are led to ruin by secretism,

we are not agreed, and cannot have fellowship.

As regards chiliasm, the doctrine that Christ shall return to reign a thousand years upon earth prior to the final judgment, the Lutheran confessors at Augsburg in 1530 declared, that "they condemn others also who now scatter Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed." (*Augsb. Conf.*, Art. XVII.) The kingdom of our Lord is not of this world, but is a kingdom of grace in which believers are prepared for the kingdom of glory. According to the Apostles' Creed, which our children learn and confess before they are admitted to holy communion, Christ shall come at the last day, as the Scriptures teach, "to judge the quick and the dead," not to establish a temporal kingdom which would be essentially different from that which is already established, and in which He reigns by His word and sacraments as His blessed means of grace unto salvation. This is still the voice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and with this we are in complete and hearty accord. We ask only that earnest account be made of the truth confessed, and that accordingly no doctrine be sanctioned, not even by the consent implied in silence, which conflicts with that confession.

In the eyes of the Joint Synod, admitting ministers of other churches and of a different confession

to our pulpits is inconsistent with her profession and her duty. Notwithstanding all the abuse heaped upon us for entertaining this conviction, we must persist in holding it and ordering our practice accordingly. Both faith and charity require it. We do not teach that ministers of other churches have no valid call to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, or that their ministrations are without efficacy. Nothing of that sort is taught in the Scriptures, and nothing of that sort appears in our Confessions. The Lord requires that ministers be rightly called by the Church, to which He has entrusted the means of grace, but does not command the rite of ordination to make the call valid, and least of all does He make the efficacy of the Word and sacrament dependent on such ordination or any other ecclesiastical rites. As far as any hindrances arising from such questions are concerned, pastors of other churches would be cheerfully welcomed to our pulpits. But the Lutheran Church would betray the insincerity of her confession if she permitted men to teach in her congregations who do not even profess to believe her doctrines, and who, as regards the distinctive articles of her faith, avow their dissent from her teaching. Fully assured that what she confesses is the truth, which God requires her to teach for the glory of His name and the salvation of souls purchased by His blood, she cannot entrust the work of teaching in her churches and schools

to men who do not agree with her concerning the doctrine of the gospel which she publicly proclaims in her symbols. Even if preachers of other denominations would, in order to gain access to our pulpits, give satisfactory assurances that they will teach nothing at variance with our faith, they could not, as long as they declare their adherence to a different confession, be permitted to preach to our congregations. That act of pulpit fellowship itself would be understood as a declaration on our part that the differences between their churches and ours are not of such a nature as to necessitate separate organizations, and therefore as an admission that we are maintaining divisions which have no ground in faith and conscience, and for that reason are sinful. The Lutheran Church is sincere in her confession, and therefore cannot consent, by any voluntary act of hers, to make the impression that in her estimation her distinctive doctrines are not of God and are not necessary unto the true unity of the Church. Her rule is "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Rom. xvi. 17. Those who believe what is written by inspiration of God for their learning, and from their hearts confess what they believe because it is the very truth of God, will readily understand why no considerations of courtesy are permitted to move us in opposition to the requirements of faith.

The same rule applies to the other question of altar fellowship. Admitting members of other denominations to communion in our churches would be practically declaring that the differences between them and us do not pertain to the faith, but are mere matters of human opinion which belong to the sphere of liberty; that therefore the Lutheran Church has grievously erred in putting her distinctive doctrines into her Confession as a part of the Christian Creed; and that by asserting agreement in these, as well in the other parts of her Confession, to be requisite to true unity, and therefore a necessary condition of membership and fellowship, she has made needless divisions in the Church. The Joint Synod sincerely accepts the Lutheran Confession, and therefore cannot do this. She cannot admit that the Lutheran Church sets forth human opinions as articles of faith, and thus seeks to bind human ordinances on the consciences of Christ's free people. In her eyes such an admission would undermine her confessional foundation and brand the great Church of the Reformation as an unevangelical sect, which before God has no right to live. Such doctrines as those taught in our Catechism and Augsburg Confession concerning Absolution, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for example, are not products of human reason, or opinions that rest on rational probabilities. They belong to our faith. We believe them because

God's Word teaches them, and we confess them because we believe them. If others do not believe them, we deplore it and wish it were otherwise, but that cannot be allowed to shake or disturb our faith. Their conduct is not our rule or standard. We abide by the Holy Scriptures, whatever attitude others may assume towards the doctrines which they teach us. Meantime it does not enter our hearts to think or say that all other denominations are not churches, or that their members are not Christians. The imputation to us of such opinions is sheer uncharitableness. There is nothing to warrant and nothing to justify it. We hold no such opinions, and maintain nothing from which they could be justly inferred. There are churches that err. They are churches notwithstanding their errors, and they would not be churches if there were no Christian believers among them. But we could not answer for it on the judgment day if by word or act we gave our sanction to their error. Who shall blame us for leaving the responsibility for it to those who make divisions contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and for abiding by the truth of the gospel, notwithstanding their obstinate persistence in error and consequent refusal to join us in confessing that truth? Erring denominations may still retain enough of the heavenly doctrine to lead souls to Christ, the only and the all-sufficient Saviour of

men, and may thus have the children of God among them who properly constitute the Church. But that does not render their errors harmless. On the contrary, these are a source of constant danger to the spiritual life of the individual and of the congregation. "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness; and their word will eat as doth a canker." 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. Error spreads; the little leaven permitted to work, in course of time leavens the whole lump. When the Church becomes indifferent to the purity of the faith, Satan uses his opportunity of banishing the truth revealed for our salvation and urging men to flee for refuge to their own natural resources which cannot save. The subject is one of such serious moment, involving the glory of our blessed Redeemer and the salvation of millions of our ruined race, that thoughtful minds and loving hearts must look with amazement upon the sad and strange spectacle of Christian men condemning the firm adherence of other Christian men to the saving truth which they have learned from the Scriptures, and for which, according to the divine command, they earnestly contend, even if such contention result in the separation of those who will not accept it. If some will not join us in confessing the truth, we certainly cannot join them in confessing their error. Neither can we admit such human error to be ultimately as good and as

effectual for salvation as the good tidings revealed for our enlightenment from heaven. We cannot, in our loyalty to our Lord, do otherwise than decline to have fellowship at the altar of the Lord with those who teach and confess otherwise than the Word of God teaches. As to whether those who present themselves for communion are really Christians or not, that is, as to whether they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the saving of the soul or not, that is altogether a different matter. It is well for all to bear in mind that under no circumstances is it man's calling or business to judge the heart. That is God's prerogative. If a person is not willing to accept the truth which the Church believes and confesses, we can only say that he is not yet prepared to meet the conditions of church fellowship. Of that the Church must judge, and nothing more. Our pastors are ready to teach the truth which by the grace of God she possesses. If anyone will not accept instruction, or being instructed will not accept the doctrine of the gospel, agreement concerning which is necessary to the true unity of the Church, he must answer for it, as we must answer for our teaching and confession: God is his judge, as He is ours. In view of that judgment we cannot abandon our Scriptural faith and confession and make other terms of fellowship to suit his dissenting opinions.

The Joint Synod of Ohio has always been willing

to make due allowance for hindrances put into the way of consistent Lutheran practice by customs handed down from times of relaxed vigilance. She is well aware that where unionism and secretism have held sway for years they cannot be eradicated in a day. She does not expect this. She advocates no rash and revolutionary measures. But with her Lutheran Confession she insists that agreement concerning the doctrine of the gospel is a necessary condition of union and communion in the Church; that the doctrine of the gospel, concerning which agreement is necessary, is set forth in her confession of faith; and that she could not be faithful if she admitted that in any case such agreement is not necessary. When the confessional principle is once accepted and the teaching is fully and faithfully conformed to it as the regulative of Church practice, she can patiently wait while the Word of God is doing its work in the congregations. She has had need for patience in her own congregations, and has need for patience still. But she can allow no exceptions to the rule that those who preach in her pulpits and commune at her altars must agree in the faith which the gospel teaches and which the Evangelical Lutheran Church confesses. There are individuals whose weakness demands great tenderness of treatment and whose previous training pleads for patience; there may be instances in which it is difficult to decide whether

the necessary conditions of fellowship have been met, and which leave room for a difference of judgment in this regard; but these, like all other cases, must be treated under the rule that agreement concerning the doctrine of the gospel is necessary to the true unity of the Church, not as exceptions that justify a violation of the confessional principle.

To candid minds it must be apparent, that when a body claiming to be Lutheran finds our honest adherence to the Lutheran faith and confession, in doctrine and in practice, a valid ground for establishing opposition congregations on a professedly more liberal basis, to the great detriment of sound evangelical doctrine and discipline, its professions of agreement with us cannot be accepted with unquestioning confidence. Even when the Confessions of the Lutheran Church are formally adopted, there is still an essential disagreement between those who hold the doctrines there set forth to be the eternal truth of God, agreement in which is necessary to the true unity of the Church, and those who, while they profess to accept them, still regard them merely as the expression of human opinions which we have not even the right, much less the duty, to enforce in Church organization and discipline, and disagreement concerning which can, therefore, form no barrier to Church fellowship. If that which our Augsburg Confession publishes as the pure Christian faith is the very truth of the

gospel, given by inspiration of God in the Scriptures for all men and all times, we can only insist on its maintenance, whether men, call themselves what they may, accept it and go with us, or reject it and turn away from us; if it be not the blessed truth revealed from heaven for our learning and the saving of our sinful souls, there can be no more grievous sin than that of attempting to lay it as a yoke upon the necks of God's people, and making and maintaining divisions on account of it. The Lutheran Church believes the truth which God has made known to her by the gospel, and therefore cannot think of relinquishing it, or any part of it, for the accommodation of those who decline to believe it. That is the position of the Joint Synod.

On the subject of predestination, which has been much mooted in recent years, she maintains the same fidelity to the precious truth of the gospel. Practically the Lutheran Church has always been a unit in the rejection of those gloomy errors which center in the theory of absolute election to faith and irresistible grace for a chosen few. While she never swerved from the fundamental truth that salvation is by grace alone, she just as firmly maintained the other fundamental truth that salvation is by faith alone, as the only means by which the soul can appropriate the merits of Christ. Nor was she ever moved by the reasoning of Reformed

churches, plausible as it is sometimes made to appear, that if faith has any influence on the saving of the soul, man's power and merit must have some share in effecting the salvation. The plain teaching of the Bible, that all is due to God's grace, notwithstanding that faith is indispensable, proves such reasoning false. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. The Holy Spirit knows better than man in his pride of reason what is requisite that all may be ascribed to grace and all the glory may be given to God. Salvation is by grace alone, and all the glory of it belongs to God; and yet the rule is clearly revealed that "he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Faith is necessary to salvation. For human thought there is unquestionably a difficulty in the doctrine. If it depends wholly on God's will who shall be saved, it is not easy to see how, since the Scriptures declare that the will of God is the salvation of all, any soul should be lost; if it depends in any degree on man, it is not easy to see how, since the Scriptures declare that all are dead in trespasses and sins, any soul should be saved. To overcome the difficulty, Calvinists assume that God makes a difference by electing

some and not electing others, by His sovereign right choosing some persons whom He pleases to save, and by His sovereign might accomplishing His pleasure in the chosen few, while all the others are passed by and left to perish in their helplessness. The dreadful solution satisfies the reason of many, though it may shock their hearts, and in these latter evil days even some of the Lutheran name have been induced to adopt it in its main features, arguing indeed that salvation is thus still by faith, because God always makes believers of those whom He elects to salvation, but overlooking the fact that in the same sense salvation is by good works, since He always leads His people heavenward in the paths of holiness. No reasoning could induce the Joint Synod of Ohio to turn away from the comforting truth of the gospel for which the Lutheran Church contended during the past centuries of her history, and to exchange it for Calvinistic errors which her teachers have again and again exposed and refuted from the Holy Scriptures.

But she does not on that account adopt the other solution which reason suggests of the problem. Salvation is by faith, but it is not by man's power and merit. Faith is the gift of God, but it is not forced upon any man; and it has no merit of its own, but appropriates Christ's merit. Salvation is all a work of God's grace, and all the praise belongs to Him. But when He calls men by the gospel

it is His will that not only an elect portion of the called, but that all should believe it and be saved, and He offers to all of them the grace needful to this end. If any to whom the Word of this salvation is sent are not saved, it is only because the will of God, which in the domain of grace never works irresistibly and never coerces the human will, was wilfully resisted. "How often would I," says our merciful Saviour, "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. xxii. 37. "That, however," says our Confession, "many are called and few are chosen, does not mean that God is unwilling that all should be saved; but the reason is that they do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, close their ears and harden their hearts, and in this way foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot effect His work in them; or when it is heard, they consider it of no account and do not heed it." (*Form. Conc.* 526, 11.) By this we abide. So far as the Joint Synod of Ohio is concerned, it is utterly vain to argue that after all our explanations there are still difficulties in our doctrine of conversion which would be escaped by adopting the Calvinistic system. It is vain, because she builds her faith on Holy Scripture, not on man's speculative ability or his success in solving theological or psychological problems. Whatever may be the explanation of

the mystery encountered in the doctrine of human conversion by divine grace, we are quite sure that it is not to be found in the unscriptural assumption that with God there is respect of persons, and that He saves some because He wills it and elects them to faith and salvation, and does not save others because He had not the will to elect them. He would have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth, and is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9. The responsibility of choosing death rather than life rests wholly upon the unbelieving sinner, in no respect and in no degree upon our blessed Lord, who left nothing undone that His grace could do to effect the salvation of all alike. The doctrine of an absolute election, in which no reference is had to the soul's relation to Christ by faith, solves difficulties only at the expense of gospel grace and truth and comfort, and in fidelity to Christ and the Church we can only reject it.

The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States stands alone, not because she closes her eyes to the importance of uniting Synods and churches, and not because she has any special theological or ecclesiastical tendencies to maintain, or any peculiar phase of Lutheranism to advocate, but simply because she believes the sacred truth which the Evangelical Lutheran Church confesses,

holds it to be the doctrine of the gospel concerning which agreement is necessary to the true unity of the Church, and can therefore unite with others on no other basis, hearing and heeding what the Spirit saith unto the churches: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The General Synod.

By PRESIDENT J. A. SINGMASTER, D. D.

IN order to make clear the "distinctive" character of the General Synod, a brief sketch of its history is required.

The General Synod is the earliest and most conspicuous example of the effort to unite all the Lutheran Synods in America in one general body. The prime mover in its organization was the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, which at a meeting in Harrisburg, in 1818, expressed the conviction that it was "desirable that the different Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States should in some way or other stand in closer connection with each other." These Synods, five in number, included the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and that of New York and the Synods of North Carolina, Ohio and Maryland. Their total membership was about 35,000, of whom more than half belonged to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

The hopes of the Ministerium were realized in the founding of the General Synod at Hagerstown, Md., October 22d, 1820. The above-named Synods were represented by delegates, with the exception of the Ohio Synod, which refused to unite in the

movement for fear that its rights would not be properly conserved. The Tennessee Synod, which was formed in July, 1820, by withdrawing from the North Carolina Synod, sent no delegates.

At the second meeting of the General Synod, held at Frederick, Md., October, 1823, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania was not represented, having been constrained to abandon the new project on account of the prejudices of many of its congregations and the fears of some of its ministers who dreaded centralization of power in a general body. "The recession of the parent Synod, which constituted more than one-half of the Church, spread a gloom over the proceedings and produced the impression that the General Synod would prove a failure. The hopes which had been cherished for the improvement of our Zion seemed blasted, and many were disposed to abandon the project of a union. The following resolution was offered and unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That it is with feelings of the deepest regret that we learn from the minutes of the Synod of Pennsylvania that they were induced by peculiar circumstances for the present to recede from an institution which they aided in establishing and which they still profess to regard as proper and highly beneficial to the interests of the Church, but that this Synod entertains the highest confidence in their brethren of Pennsylvania, and confidently trusts that they will resume their connection with the General Synod.*

* *Evangelical Review,* Vol. V, 244.

The return of the Ministerium was delayed for thirty years, until 1853. In the meantime the General Synod went bravely on, founding its schools and firmly establishing its work. The direct influence, therefore, of the Ministerium on the confessional and the practical development of the General Synod could not have been large during the first generation of its history. In the decade following 1853, its influence was considerable, but by no means dominating. Indirectly, the two bodies influenced each other, for there was no contention between them. Moreover, many of the men who became prominent in the Ministerium and the General Council received their theological training at the General Synod Seminary.

From the feeble beginnings of 1820 and 1823, the General Synod grew to be a relatively large body. In 1860, when it attained its greatest comparative strength, it embraced 864 out of 1313 ministers, and 164,000 out of 245,000 communicants, or about 66 per cent. of the entire Lutheran Church in America. This proportion has not been reached by any other body, though the General Synod is now outnumbered by the Synodical Conference and the General Council.

Between the years 1860 and 1866, the General Synod lost over 70,000 members through the withdrawal of the Southern Synods on account of the Civil War, and the withdrawal of those which later

formed the General Council. The departure of the latter was precipitated by a parliamentary ruling at the convention of the General Synod at Fort Wayne, in 1866, the separation, however, being inevitable on other grounds, confessional, practical, and personal. In spite of these lamentable losses, such has been the recuperative power of the General Synod that at present (1913) it numbers 1366 ministers and 330,000 confirmed members. The growth of the entire Lutheran Church in the meantime has been phenomenal; it numbers now 2,321,000 members.

Though the General Synod has not in all respects realized the hopes of its founders, it has certainly proved the wisdom of its organization by the service it has rendered to Lutheranism and to Christianity. The fathers who founded it were wise and good men, but they were not provided with superhuman foresight, which alone could have calculated on the mighty changes which took place in Church and State during the last century. Even had the events been foreknown, it is hardly conceivable that any general organization could have been made strong enough and also flexible enough to embrace the diverse tongues and the varied shades of doctrinal interpretation of our great Lutheran Church.

The formation of the General Synod was an event of surpassing importance in the history of American Lutheranism, both from a practical and

a doctrinal standpoint. It preserved at that time the identity of the Lutheran Church on this continent. "The General Synod must be regarded as a very important forward movement, and its influence as beneficial. It necessarily was not without the weaknesses that characterized the Lutheran Church at that time. One who ignores the entire historical development will find much to criticise and condemn, when examined from the standpoint of what is demanded by consistency with accurate theological definitions and clear conceptions of church polity. But he will find just as much that incurs the same judgment in the proceedings of the Synods that united to form it. The faults peculiar to each Synod were lost while only the common faults of all of them remained. The General Synod was a protest against the Socinianizing tendency in New York and the schemes of a union with the Reformed in Pennsylvania, and with the Episcopalians in North Carolina. It stood for the independent existence of the Lutheran Church in America, and the clear and unequivocal confession of a positive Lutheran faith. It was not ready yet, as these Synods were not ready, to return to the foundations laid by Muhlenberg and his associates, from which there had been a general recession from twenty-five to thirty years before. Lament defects as we may, the General Synod saved the Church, as it became anglicized, from the calamity of the type of doctrine

which within the New York Ministerium had been introduced with the English language. It had an outlook that included in its sweep the entire Church in all its interests, as the reports on the state of the Lutheran Church, in the various Synods of the country and throughout the world, appended to its minutes, show."*

"The impartial historian must readily concede that the General Synod, with great courage and determination, undertook to give a standing and recognition to the Lutheran Church in America, such as she had not enjoyed before; that it was a 'holy experiment, concentrating the resources of the Church to effect purposes to which no individual Synod would have been competent,' and that it succeeded in organizing the educational and missionary work of the Church. The establishment of the Theological Seminary; the sending of a delegation to Germany to rouse the sympathies of the Fatherland, and to collect contributions for the Lutheran Church in America; the formation of the Parent Education Society to assist indigent, pious young men in their preparation for the gospel ministry; the Central Missionary Society, with special reference to domestic missions; the Foreign Missionary Society for the preaching of the gospel among the Telugus in India; the establishment of a Pastors' Fund; the attention given to Church literature and a Book

* Jacobs' *History of the Ev. Luth. Church,* 361 f.

Company—all these were measures of the highest importance, looking to the vital interests of the Lutheran Church in her new western home."*

The confessional history of the General Synod has probably never been fully written from a sympathetic and yet objective standpoint. It may be too late and quite needless to do so now; at all events we shall not here undertake the task. It must be a matter of surprise to the cursory reader of our American Lutheran history that in spite of prevailing confessional laxity, the General Synod found the paths of the fathers very early in its career, and that, as a body, it never strayed far from these paths.

Let us consider for a moment the confessional situation in our Lutheran Synods at the time of the founding, and during the early years of the General Synod. The saintly Muhlenberg had, in a measure, restored the faith of our Church and incorporated into the original constitution of the Ministerium (1748) a recognition of the Confessions. "In 1787 the patriarch was called to his rest, and in 1792 the Ministerium of Pennsylvania adopted a new constitution, omitting all reference to the Confession of the Lutheran Church. This changed constitution formed the basis of that adopted by the Ministerium of New York. A few years afterward in the latter Synod that famous resolution was

* Spaeth's *Life of Krauth,* Vol. I, 330.

passed: 'That on account of the intimate relation existing between the English Episcopalian and Lutheran Churches, the identity of their doctrine, and the near approach of their Church discipline, this consistory will never acknowledge a newly erected Church in places where the members may partake of the services of the said English Episcopal Church.'"* Dr. Quitman, President of the Ministerium of New York for twenty-one years, published in 1814, "with the consent and approbation of the Synod," a catechism which denied the deity of Christ. A similar catechism had been published before this for the congregations in North Carolina by Dr. Velthusen. In 1794 the Lutheran ministers in North Carolina ordained a Scotchman and pledged him to the rules, ordinances and customs of the Protestant Episcopal Church. "Under this pledge Mr. Miller was pastor of Lutheran congregations for twenty-seven years. In 1810 Gottlieb Schober, to the end of his life professing to be also a Moravian, was ordained by the North Carolina Synod."† As late as 1818 the Ministerium of Pennsylvania was negotiating with the German Reformed Church with a view to the establishing of a joint theological seminary. The Ohio Synod, in 1839, "was still willing to unite with the Reformed

* Spaeth's *Life of Krauth*, Vol. I, 319.
†Jacobs' *History*, 319.

Synod."* Everywhere, except in the little Synod of Tennessee, there was the greatest neglect of the Lutheran Confession and the most hearty unionism.

The first constitution of the General Synod makes no mention of the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. This is not surprising, as none of its constituents did so. Nevertheless, the confessions are certainly alluded to by implication in the conditions laid down for admission to the General Synod: "All regularly constituted Lutheran Synods, holding the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as taught by our Church, not now in connection with the General Synod, may, at any time, become associated with it by adopting this constitution, and sending delegates to its convention according to the ratio specified." (Art. III, sec. 3.)

At the establishment, however, of the Theological Seminary, in 1825, the General Synod demanded of the professors subscription to the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Smaller Catechism. This requirement was introduced by Prof. S. S. Schmucker, the first chairman of the faculty, and for nearly forty years a teacher in the Seminary. When Mr. Schmucker was barely of age, such was the clearness of his views, that he expressed the conviction that all Lutheran ministers should be pledged to the Augustana. In a letter dated "Princeton, February

* Neve's *Brief History of the Lutheran Church*, 141.

17th, 1820," addressed to his father, in giving an account of a recent visit to his friend, the Rev. F. C. Schaeffer, pastor in New York City, he writes: "We promised each other that in reliance on God, we would do everything possible to promote the following objects: In general to labor for the welfare of our Church, that a rule may be established, according to which every applicant must be examined in regard to his personal Christianity, that the Augsburg Confession should again be brought up out of the dust, and everyone must subscribe to the twenty-one articles, and declare before God, by his subscription, that it corresponds with the Bible, not *quantum,* but *quia;* and we promised to do everything possible to promote learning among us."* For many years Dr. Schmucker was the most conspicuous Lutheran in America, and the Lutheran Church owes much to his native ability, culture and self-denying and efficient work. From the preliminary meeting in 1819 until 1870 he was present as a delegate or visitor at every convention of the General Synod. In the dark days of 1823, when the mother Synod failed to appear, Schmucker's influence helped to save the General Synod from dissolution.† It is with regret that we remember that

* Anstadt's *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D. D.,* 63.

†*Ibid.* 122 f.

his convictions in regard to the Augustana seem to have grown lax with advancing years.

In 1829 the General Synod adopted a form of constitution for the government of district Synods, in which candidates for ordination were asked the following question: "Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?" The constitution was framed by Dr. S. S. Schmucker.

As far as we know this quasi recognition of the Augsburg Confession was acceptable to all concerned, but for binding force it falls far behind the obligation required of the professors in the Seminary. The words "substantially correct" connote a mere *quatenus* subscription, and left the way open for the most latitudinarian interpretations. The time for a clear apprehension and full appreciation of the confessions had not arrived. This is apparent in an article published in the *Evangelical Review* as late as October, 1853, written by one of the editors, either Dr. Krauth, Sr., or Dr. Reynolds—probably the latter, for he was present at the convention of 1839, to which the article refers:

"The feeling seemed to prevail [in 1839] that it was not the province of the General Synod to establish any theological basis, or to propose any test of Lutheran orthodoxy; that it was merely an advisory council of the Church, and that however men might

differ upon points that were regarded as non-essential, they could still meet together in this General Convention to deliberate on the means best calculated to promote the general interest of the Church. It is not the business of the General Synod to inquire in reference to any Synod applying for its admission into its connection whether it gives only a qualified assent to the Augsburg Confession, or whether it subscribes to every sentiment contained in the Symbolical Books. From the very beginning it was understood that no such touchstone should be applied. We have no sympathy with that illiberal, exclusive spirit manifested in some quarters. We look with no favor upon proscriptive intolerance, whether found in those who represent what is called the Old Lutheran System, or those who question the orthodoxy of all who do not chime in with their doctrinal views, or subscribe to their theological basis."*

The year 1853 marks an era in the history of the General Synod, and gives a fair idea of the situation of the Lutheran Church from a confessional standpoint. At the convention held in May, at Winchester, the Synod of Pennsylvania returned to the General Synod, and three other Synods were admitted. "Although there was not much business transacted at this meeting, yet all the delegates in attendance seemed to feel that its influence upon the

* *Evangelical Review,* Vol. V, 260.

Church would be salutary. The kindest feeling and the greatest harmony prevailed."*

The confessional position of the General Synod, therefore, was not called in question by any of its constituents. Evidently the Synod of Pennsylvania was satisfied therewith, or it would not have reunited with the General Synod. At the meeting of the latter body, held in April, 1853, at Lancaster, Pa., Dr. C. F. Schaeffer presented a report on "The Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," which concluded with the resolution: "That when this Synod employs the phrase 'Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,' it employs it in such a sense as to correspond to the uniform usage of the Church, namely, implying that the doctrinal system of the Church is *that* system, whole and entire, which is taught in (1) the three ancient or Ecumenical Symbols; (2) the Augsburg Confession; (3) the Apology; (4) the Smalcald Articles; (5) the Large and the Small Catechisms, and (6) the Formula of Concord." Dr. Schaeffer, in commenting on this matter, says: "The Synod declined to adopt it in this form, as several members entertained an apprehension that the consciences of some might feel oppressed by a formal recognition of its terms, without any further explanations and relaxations."

Instead of the above resolution the Synod adopted the following preamble and resolutions:

* *Evangelical Review*, Vol. V, 278.

"WHEREAS, (1) The Evangelical Lutheran Church has of late arrived at clearer views of its doctrinal and other distinctive features, and, whereas (2) we are justified in expecting that both the internal and the external welfare of our Church will be thereby essentially promoted, and, whereas (3) we recognize the importance of a historical and confessional basis for the Church; therefore,

"1. *Resolved,* That we also with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers, acknowledge the collective body of the Symbolical Books, as the historical and confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and that we also, like the Lutheran Church of former times, accord to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism an especial importance among our Symbolical Books generally.

"2. *Resolved,* That we enjoin it upon all the ministers and candidates of our Church, as their duty, to make themselves better and more thoroughly acquainted with these venerable documents of the faith of our fathers than has hitherto been the case with many.

"3. *Resolved,* That it is not by any means our intention hereby to diminish the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures, but much rather to place it in the clearest light possible, and that we by no means design through these symbols to place constraint upon the consciences of any, but much rather through them to bind the conscience to the Holy Scriptures as the divine source of truth."

Concerning these resolutions, Dr. Schaeffer remarks: "Some may possibly regard them as quite stringent, others may find them a somewhat weak infusion, it is true, but still, perhaps, best suited to a state of convalescence, and a flattering indication that the Apostle's 'strong meat' can soon be safely substituted for 'milk.' "*

* *Ev. Rev.,* Vol. V, 212 f.

In its application for readmission into the General Synod, in 1853, the Ministerium placed on record: (1) The approval "of the principles laid down in its constitution for the government" of the several district Synods; (2) the opinion that the General Synod was "entertaining the same views of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel as those set forth in the Confessional writings of the Evangelical Church, and especially in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession," and that the General Synod was bound by its own constitution not to make any innovations or alterations of this faith; (3) the claim that the Ministerium retained the right to control its internal affairs as heretofore; (4) the right to demand of its delegates their protest and withdrawal from the General Synod in order to report to the Ministerium, in case the General Synod should violate its constitution and require assent to anything conflicting with the Evangelical Lutheran Church; (5) an appeal to other Lutheran bodies to unite with the General Synod.

There was apparently no objection whatever to these conditions of membership, for they accorded with the position of the General Synod. Yet the return of the Ministerium with its lately awakened Lutheran consciousness no doubt precipitated the publication of the "Definite Platform" of Dr. S. S. Schmucker (1855), which was a protest against an evidently increasing valuation of the Confessions.

The "Definite Platform" was essentially an attempted revision of the Augsburg Confession, which, it was alleged, contained at least five errors, namely, the approval of the ceremonies of the mass, private confession and absolution, denial of a divine obligation of a Christian Sabbath, baptismal regeneration, and the real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the eucharist. The platform was offered in denial of these errors and as a more specific expression of the General Synod's doctrinal basis, being "surrounded by German Churches which profess the entire mass of former symbols." Copies of this platform were sent to the district Synods with the suggestion that it be endorsed by them with the resolution "that we will not receive into our Synod any minister who will not adopt this platform."

With the exception of a few small Synods, the district Synods of the General Synod emphatically repudiated the platform. At the meeting of the East Pennsylvania Synod, in the fall of 1855, the Rev. J. A. Brown, who became in 1864 Dr. Schmucker's successor as head of the Seminary, offered a resolution expressing "unqualified disapprobation of this most dangerous attempt to change the doctrinal basis and revolutionize the existing character of the Lutheran Churches now united in the General Synod," and solemnly warning "sister Synods against this dangerous proposition."

The Pittsburgh Synod, at its meeting in Zelienople, Pa. (May 27th, 1856), in dealing with the "Definite Platform," adopted the following resolution, prepared by C. P. Krauth, Jr.:

"*Resolved,* That while this Synod, resting on the word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith on its infallible warrant, rejects the Romish doctrine of the real presence or transubstantiation, and with it the doctrine of consubstantiation; rejects the Romish mass and all the ceremonies distinctive of the mass; denies any power in the sacraments, as an *opus operatum,* or that the blessings of baptism and the Lord's Supper can be received without faith; rejects auricular confession and priestly absolution; holds that there is no priesthood on earth, but that of all believers, and that God only can forgive sins; and maintains the divine obligation of the Sabbath. And while we would, with our whole heart, reject any part of any confession which taught doctrines in conflict with this, our testimony, nevertheless, before God and His Church, we declare that in our judgment the Augsburg Confession, properly interpreted, is in perfect consistence with this our testimony and with the Holy Scriptures as regards the errors specified."

This identical resolution was offered to the General Synod and adopted by it at York in May, 1864.

The episode of the "Definite Platform" is here mentioned because the facts have often been so misrepresented or misunderstood as to cast reflections upon the orthodoxy of the General Synod. No incident could have more forcibly emphasized its real conservatism. That Dr. Schmucker, the head of the Seminary, supported by Dr. Kurtz, the editor of the *Lutheran Observer,* and Dr. Sprecher, Presi-

dent of Wittenberg College, was not able through the "Definite Platform" to loosen the General Synod from its moorings is remarkable. The former two retained their convictions to the end; the last acknowledged that he was mistaken when he "once thought that a Lutheranism, modified by the Puritan element, was desirable." "I can now say," wrote Dr. Sprecher, late in life, "as I could not formerly, that like Spener, I can for myself accept the symbols of the Church without reserve."*

That the "Definite Platform" caused the recession of the Ministerium some years later seems quite improbable, for the chief promoter of the General Council, the Rev. C. P. Krauth, Jr., was at this time an ardent defender of the General Synod. He made apologies for his old teacher, and probably prevented his impeachment by the Seminary Board when it was urged by the Rev. J. A. Brown. The "Definite Platform" was rather a symptom of unrest, created chiefly by the growing apprehension of our rich confessional heritage, and incidentally aggravated by racial misunderstandings and the friction of strong personalities.

There is a striking parallelism between national and ecclesiastical movements. The Civil War had its counterpart in Church dissensions. The human spirit in both cases shows great sensitiveness and combativeness. Party feeling ran high.

* Neve's *Brief History*, p. 62; Jacobs' *History*, 369.

When the General Synod met in York, in May, 1864, various events on the surface and forebodings beneath it, prompted it to fortify its position as a conservative Lutheran body by providing for the amendment of its constitution, and by adopting the resolution quoted above, as well as by taking the following action: "*Resolved*, That this General Synod most unqualifiedly reprobates and condemns the course so frequently pursued of denouncing each other as cold formalists on the one hand, and on the other as traitors to the Lutheran Church." But in spite of all this it could not allay dissension.

The delegates of the Ministerium were offended at what they believed to be the irregular admission of the Franckean Synod, and withdrew in order to report to the Ministerium. The die was cast. There was later on some parliamentary sparring, but the separation came really in 1864. A few days after the adjournment of the General Synod, the Ministerium, at its meeting in Pottstown, Pa. (May 25th, 1864), resolved, "That in the name of the Lord we now undertake the establishment of a theological seminary." At a special meeting in Allentown (July 26th and 27th) the Ministerium founded the new Seminary which was to be located in Philadelphia. In August, Dr. J. A. Brown was elected to succeed Dr. Schmucker at Gettysburg. These events are mentioned in their chronological order for their

bearing on the confessional history of the General Synod.

The withdrawal of the Ministerium, the founding a new Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and the organization of the General Council, were largely influenced, if not conditioned, by a single event—the choice of Dr. Schmucker's successor. "If the chair at Gettysburg," says Dr. Jacobs, "vacated by the resignation of Dr. S. S. Schmucker, had been filled by his [Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth's] election, the Ministerium would in all probability have felt that his presence was a guarantee that the future ministers would be furnished with the necessary defences against all radical tendencies. When the election resulted differently, it was no antipathy to the professor-elect, who had done good service in the battle against the 'Definite Platform,' that turned the sentiment of a large portion of those who had hitherto been averse to another seminary, toward the prompt execution of a project proposed but not acted upon at the regular sessions of the Ministerium, and the enlargement of its scope beyond that of a seminary for German pastors." *

There is a slight chronological inaccuracy in this statement. As shown above, the new seminary was organized and the professors chosen before the election of Dr. Brown, which, however, must have been anticipated. It was Dr. Brown's opinion, fre-

* Jacobs' *History*, 462.

quently expressed to the writer, that the failure of the efforts to make Dr. C. P. Krauth, Jr., the head of the Gettysburg Seminary was the real occasion of the creation of the General Council.

That the election of Dr. Brown justified the founding of a new seminary, in the same State, does not seem apparent, in view of his sound confessional position. When Dr. Schmucker resigned there remained his colleagues, both stanch conservatives—Dr. Charles Philip Krauth, the father of Charles Porterfield Krauth, and Dr. Charles F. Schaeffer, who at once accepted a call to the new seminary. These two, with Dr. Brown, could surely have been safely entrusted with the training of the future ministers.

The amendment proposed at York, in 1864, and submitted to the vote of the district Synods, was ratified by a large majority of these Synods, including the Ministerium, and was formally declared adopted in 1866 at Fort Wayne. It reads as follows:

"All regularly constituted Lutheran Synods, not now in connection with the General Synod, receiving and holding with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers the word of God as contained in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word, and of the faith of our Church, founded upon that Word, may at any time become associated with the General Synod by adopting

this constitution and sending delegates to its convention, according to the ratio specified in section first of this article."

The doctrinal basis, as amended in 1866, remained unchanged for nearly fifty years. Various deliverances made at the conventions of the General Synod during this period repudiate false charges and affirm the Lutheran character and confessional fidelity of the body. These statements finally became so voluminous, that the General Synod, in convention at Richmond, Ind., in 1909, entrusted a committee with the work of incorporating the substance of these deliverances "into one clear and definite statement of our doctrinal basis, and to report the same at the next meeting of the General Synod with a view to placing it in the constitution, . . . there being no intention in this action in any way to change our present doctrinal basis." The committee made its report in 1911, at Washington, and the amendments were duly submitted to the twenty-four district Synods, all of which approved them. They were, therefore, declared adopted at the convention held at Atchison, Kan., in 1913. They are as follows:

ARTICLE II

DOCTRINAL BASIS

"With the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the fathers, the General Synod receives and holds the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and it receives and

holds the unaltered Augsburg Confession as a correct exhibition of the faith and doctrine of our Church as founded upon that Word."

ARTICLE III

SECONDARY SYMBOLS

"While the General Synod regards the Augsburg Confession as a sufficient and altogether adequate doctrinal basis for the co-operation of Lutheran Synods, it also recognizes the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalkald Articles, the Small Catechism of Luther, the Large Catechism of Luther and the Formula of Concord as expositions of Lutheran doctrine of great historical and interpretative value, and especially commends the Small Catechism as a book of instruction."

The doctrinal basis, as it now exists, means to the members of the General Synod exactly what it meant before its verbal amendment. For a generation it has been interpreted to mean an unequivocal subscription to the Augsburg Confession. The addition of the word "unaltered" indicates no change in conviction or in fact, for the General Synod has never known any other than the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. The addition was made to silence misrepresentation and to avoid misunderstanding. Other verbal changes were made for the sake of clearness.

It will be seen, therefore, that the subscription to the Augustana is unequivocal. There are no reservations as to the acceptance of the doctrines taught

therein. Taking a firm stand upon the Scriptures as the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the General Synod receives and holds the Unaltered Augustana as correctly setting forth the inner faith and the objective doctrine of our Church, which is founded upon the Word. It confesses that the Augustana is a true exhibition of Biblical doctrine.

In its recognition of the Secondary Symbols, as "of great historical and interpretative value," the General Synod acknowledges that questions have arisen, and may still arise, which are not touched upon by the Augsburg Confession, and hence it places no barriers in the way of the development of doctrine in harmony with the genius of the Confession. Its theologians have always quoted from these symbols. Indeed, it is quite unthinkable that a Lutheran dogmatic could be constructed without their aid.

The General Synod, however, does not require subscription to the Secondary Symbols as a condition of membership in that body. Their formal acceptance is a matter of liberty with the individual Synod. If, in the judgment of a district Synod, it is considered wise to demand of its ministers subscription to these symbols, the General Synod interposes no objections. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession, however, is considered an ample basis for the co-operation of Synods. It is the simplest and

strongest platform of union. A hearty reception of its teachings makes a man a true Lutheran.

Of course, every Lutheran loves the Small Catechism. A church which has no place for it would hardly merit the name Lutheran.

The bone of contention among Lutherans has been the Form of Concord, which we personally rate very high, and whose teachings we gladly accept. But it is too well known to need proof here that it has never been universally received in Europe or in America. Its rejection at first was the result, at least in part, of politics, of prejudice, or of misunderstanding. These various attitudes are still maintained to some extent, especially by many who have not thought it worth while to make an independent study of it.

Moreover, the Form of Concord, without mentioning the other secondary symbols, is too extensive a statement to be accepted as a creed. Where its subscription is demanded we fear that its endorsement is in many cases not very hearty or intelligent. At all events, the General Synod believes that the Augsburg Confession is not only an all-sufficient basis for co-operation, but also that it is the only feasible ground of one great, united Lutheran Church.

The General Synod has wisely refrained from making minute theological distinctions, and has thus obviated much useless discussion. Apart from

the several actions already alluded to, it has made few special doctrinal deliverances. The simple "doctrinal basis," as it now stands, is believed to be broad enough to embrace what is essential to the platform of a general body, and guarded enough to exclude laxity in faith and practice.

The General Synod has not found any occasion for special action concerning Chiliasm. Neither has it entered upon a discussion of election, believing itself to be thoroughly Lutheran and Christian on this matter. It heartily accepts the Pauline doctrine that the believer is justified without the deeds of the law, and without the least merit on his part, or the smallest meritorious co-operation, relying solely upon grace apprehended by faith, which is the gift of God.

If the title of this volume, so far as it pertains to "Distinctive Doctrines," carries with it the suggestion that there are great, fundamental differences of doctrine in the several branches of the American Lutheran Church, we believe it to be a misnomer. For, as far as we are able to see, there is an essential agreement among all Lutheran bodies on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as taught in the Bible and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions. While there are individuals in all the different Synods who are erratic in their beliefs and practices, a body is not to be judged by the opinion or the actions of one individual or of small groups, but by its own authoritative deliverances.

Concerning "Usages," it may be said that the General Synod conforms to the Lutheran type of Christian worship and work. While it accepts the principles enunciated in the Augustana, that absolute uniformity in rites and ceremonies instituted by men is not necessary to the unity of the Church, it believes that a voluntary uniformity in the use of forms of worship promotes the unity and the edification of the Church. And as these forms of worship express the Lutheran view of certain doctrines, and embody the Lutheran "consciousness" as well as promote good order and dignity in the service of the house of God, the General Synod commends the use of fixed forms as long as they serve to edification.

Our congregations, almost without exception, use some form of worship authorized by the General Synod. The Common Service, in whose preparation the General Synod co-operated with the General Council and with the United Synod of the South, has been adopted by the great majority of its leading congregations, and is regarded with favor generally. The use of vestments is optional. In many of the churches of the larger towns and cities, the minister wears the clerical gown.

Preaching is evangelical in content; and in form it follows the ways of the fathers. It has not degenerated on the one hand into mere entertainment, nor, on the other, into a propaganda of social re-

forms and other fads. Comparatively little that is sensational or erratic is heard from our pulpits.

A Sunday School is connected with practically every congregation, and is conducted in the usual way. The International Series of Lessons is commonly used; but steps are being taken to unite with "other Lutheran bodies in the preparation of a common Lutheran series of Sunday School lessons." It is quite likely that such a series will gradually win its way into common favor.

Catechisation is universally practiced. Its omission, in the instruction of children and of unconfirmed adults applying for admission into the Church, would be regarded as a sign of spiritual decay, as well as a serious departure from Lutheran traditions.

The Churches of the General Synod have also subsidiary organizations, such as Young People's Societies of various kinds, Brotherhoods for the older men, Children's Bands and the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society. The last named society has been an extraordinarily active and useful auxiliary to the several Mission Boards, having during the less than forty years of its existence raised a million dollars for missions, and is contributing now over sixty thousand dollars annually toward this end. The Laymen's Missionary Movement is also doing excellent service.

The General Synod maintains about two hundred

and fifty missions in the home field, and sustains important mission stations in Africa and India. In the Republic of Liberia it has established and maintained an educational and industrial mission, in which a truly apostolic spirit of devotion until death has been shown by its missionaries. Hundreds of boys and girls have been taught in its schools and shops and sent forth as a leaven of the gospel in the Dark Continent. The work in India has attained considerable dimensions, the number of baptized members having reached forty thousand. The equipment of this mission is excellent, including hospitals, orphanages, industrial plants, a fine college, a theological seminary and numerous minor schools.

Some practical questions which have at times perplexed other general bodies of the Lutheran Church in America, and have called forth special deliverances, have not been formally dealt with by the General Synod, although some of them have been by district Synods.

Though there is no doubt in some sections of the General Synod a strong sentiment against secret orders, it has never legislated upon the subject, preferring to leave the matter to the conscience of the individual and to the jurisdiction of the district Synods.

The questions of pulpit and altar fellowship are also left to the decision of the individual pastor and

congregation, or to the determination of the district Synods. As a fact, such fellowship is generally recognized as right in principle, while in practice it is by no means common. The exchange of pulpits and the invitation of non-Lutheran Christians to the Lord's table could be abandoned entirely without seriously affecting our customs or our faith, were it not that such a course would be regarded as an evidence of exclusiveness, and would be interpreted as a breach of fellowship with the Church universal.

No true Lutheran would deny that there are Christians in all denominations, though they may never have heard the name of Luther. And there are numerous faithful and orthodox ministers in other churches, who are known for their piety and their efficiency. There are also great missionaries in other denominations who have inspiring messages for Christendom. There are noble, learned men who are recognized as defenders of our common faith against the assaults of infidelity. There is scarcely a Lutheran periodical, published by any of our general bodies, which does not contain entire columns of wholesome matter from the pens of non-Lutherans. The General Synod does not object when such men, with proper discrimination, are invited to address our people from the pulpit.

The invitation to non-Lutherans to the Holy Communion is not intended for members of neigh-

boring churches, but for the stranger who may be on a journey, or for a visitor to one of the families of the congregation, it being always stated or understood that such an one is in good standing in his own church. In some of our churches it is expected that such a communicant be present at the preparatory service. The intention of this altar fellowship is the extension of the means of grace to those who are away from home.

Acting on the principle of evangelical comity, the General Synod has always maintained friendly relations with other religious bodies, especially with such as most nearly approach it in practice and polity. From the beginning of its history it has exchanged fraternal delegates with the Reformed and the Presbyterian bodies, and has recognized the presence at its conventions of visiting clergymen of all evangelical denominations which extend similar courtesies. These practices are not to be construed as "unionistic" in the offensive sense of that term, but as an acknowledgment that the Good Shepherd has other sheep which are not of our fold. We are stimulated by their devotion to our common Master, and rejoice in any triumphs which they may win for Him.

Allied to the interchange of delegates is the participation of the General Synod in movements whose object is the world-wide spread of the gospel, the better observance of the Lord's Day, the sup-

pression of intemperance and other vices, and the general improvement of public morals. The General Synod feels an interest also in such organizations as the American Bible Society, the Tract Society and the Sunday School Union. It has been represented in the Evangelical Alliance, whose founding was promoted by Rev. Dr. S. S. Schmucker, and in kindred organizations.

In all these forms of Christian effort and activity, the General Synod sees the possibility of a larger work than it alone can do. In every case there is the understanding that the General Synod does not yield its conception of truth. Should it at any time appear that its co-operation can justly be construed as a compromise in things essential, it would without doubt withdraw from such associations.

The General Synod, however, is more anxious to cultivate first of all a fraternal feeling in its own household of faith, and is in hearty sympathy with all movements which contemplate the unification of the great Lutheran Church of America. It longs for the day when the original purpose of its organization shall have its fulfillment in the Federation of the Churches of the Lutheran Reformation. To this end its official or personal representatives cordially unite with Lutheran brethren of all Synods in conferences for the consideration of problems of common interest.

A very great deal has already been accomplished

through the Joint Committee of the General Synod, the General Council and the United Synod of the South in the preparation of the Common Service, and of the English hymnal, as well as of a translation into English of Luther's Small Catechism and of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in the last of which the Joint Synod of Ohio also participated. The General Synod and the General Council also issue a common Sunday School paper, bearing the titles respectively, *Lutheran Young People* and *Young Folks.* The proposed establishment in India of a Lutheran Theological Seminary, under the auspices of all Lutheran bodies represented on the field, has the hearty support of the General Synod.

The General Synod has maintained an unbroken existence for almost a century. Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner-stone, it stands unshaken in its faith and in the conviction that God has appointed a service which it must perform. A large measure of divine favor has been its portion, and by grace it has accomplished much good. It does not cherish the delusion that its present form and its existing relation to other bodies are necessarily perpetual. It stands ready to join hands with all who are of like faith, in the endeavor to realize the unity for which our Lord Himself so earnestly prayed.

The German Iowa Synod

By REV. PROF. S. FRITSCHEL, D. D.

THE Synod of Iowa and Other States, which at the present time numbers nearly 570 ministers, embraces eight districts covering an area comprising nineteen States, from Ohio to Washington, and from Minnesota and Dakota down to Texas, and was founded the 24th of August, 1854, by three ministers, one candidate (who was to go as missionary to the Indians), and one lay delegate. All the members of the newly organized body had been sent from Germany by Pastor W. Loehe and the Society for Home Missions of the Lutheran Church in Bavaria. This Society previously, in connection with the Missouri Synod, had been doing a blessed missionary work among the immigrants in the central States of the Union. It represented a strictly confessional as well as œcumenical Lutheranism. The work thus commenced was to be carried on by the Iowa Synod. The congregation at St. Sebald, Iowa, a Lutheran Church colony, in whose midst the organization of the Synod took place, and the Theological Seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, which was to furnish ministers for the missionary work of the Synod, were founded by Loehe. Indeed, the organization of the Synod itself took place under his

advice and auspices, as had been the case when the Missouri Synod had been established. This connection with Loehe has given to the Synod from its very beginning the peculiar churchly character which in the course of time, though developed and set forth more distinctly, it has always faithfully preserved.

1. Its first Synodical declaration was an *unreserved acknowledgment of the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.* This is the unalterable basis of the constitution of the Synod as well as of its congregations. The Synod as such accepts the *whole of the Symbolical Books,* as contained in the Concordia of 1580, whilst as to the constitutions of the individual congregations, an explicit acknowledgment of the unaltered Augsburg Confession and of Luther's Catechism is considered sufficient, since by such acknowledgment the congregations, on their part, implicitly accept the whole of the Lutheran Confessions. The Synod does not want to have this Confession accepted only as to single portions or its essential parts, *but fully and in all its doctrines.* It acknowledges just as explicitly its *thetical* as its *antithetical* decisions and declarations. It confesses what the Lutheran Symbols *confess,* over against the corresponding error, and *rejects with equal decidedness* all errors *rejected* by them. It discountenances every acceptance of the Lutheran Symbols by which they are accepted with the reservation *as far as* they are in harmony with the Word of

God, because by this their conformity with the Scriptures would be put in question; on the contrary, it accepts them as its own Confession, *because* it is convinced of their conformity with the Scriptures. This Confession, therefore, is as well its *rule* of all teaching and practice in the Church as also *the bond of church fellowship*. The Synod does not allow in its midst any doctrine or administration of the Sacraments, any church or text-books, any regulations pertaining to divine service, that would be antagonistic to the Symbols, and it makes it the duty of its Presidents and Visitors to see that no deviations of this kind shall occur. And whilst on the one hand it readily *holds fellowship*, especially altar fellowship, with such as are one with it in faith and confession, though they may differ in unessential points, yet, on the other hand, it must, for the sake of truth, and on account of the great importance of the Confession, *deny* fellowship to those who do not accept the same Confession with it. According to the constitutions of Synod and congregations, only such persons can be admitted *as members* of a congregation who accept the Confession of the Lutheran Church; and only such *congregations* as make the Lutheran Confession their own can be admitted as members of the Synod, and only such *ministers* as bind themselves to the Concordia are entrusted with the ministry.

However, in assigning this dominating position to the Confessions, the Iowa Synod has always tried

to guard against *exaggerations* by which the Confessions are put *on a level* with the Word of God, and are given a weight which is due only to the latter. The Synod is in earnest when it confesses that the *Holy Scriptures* are the only true rule by which all teachers and all doctrines are to be measured and judged, and it does not derive the normative authority of the teachings of the Confession from the fact that they are the decisions of the Church, but from the fact that they are the *pure and genuine exposition and interpretation of the Divine Word.* It has, therefore, in all its practice, followed a biblico-practical course, and has tried, guided by the Confessions, to recur in all cases and questions, to the Scriptures themselves, and to draw from them directly. The Symbols are not considered, like the Scriptures, as a judge, but as a witness and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those who then lived, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned. On account of this historical view of the Symbols, the Iowa Synod does not see in them a legal code of atomistic dogmas of equal value and equal weight, but an organic expression of the living connection of the faith of the Church. Accordingly, there is a distinction to be made between the *dogmas, properly speaking, and other parts of the Symbols;* as *e. g.,* the frequent exegetical, historical and other deduc-

tions, illustrations and demonstrations. Only the former, *i. e.,* the dogmas constitute the Confession, whilst the latter partake of this dignity only indirectly, inasmuch as they define the dogmas more clearly. What the Symbols state and intend *as a Confession,* the articles and doctrines of faith, this it is to which the Synod is bound, not because they are the Church's decisions of the controversies that have come up, but because they present the saving truth and doctrine of the Scriptures. The Church is bound to accept these doctrines which constitute the Confession in their totality, *without exception,* whilst the demand of doctrinal conformity by no means includes *all unessential* opinions which *are only occasionally* mentioned in the Symbols. Thus, *e. g.,* the obligation to the Symbols by no means refers equally to the article concerning the Conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost, and to the doctrine of the Perpetual Virginity of Mary, though the latter occasionally occurs in the Smalcald Articles. This would be a legalistic misuse of the Symbols against which the Iowa Synod has always protested.

The Synod, however, is far from being satisfied with a merely formal adherence to the Confessions. It does not wish to lay up the inheritance of pure doctrine and faith which we have received from our fathers in a napkin, but considers it as a pound which is to be employed most profitably. It discountenances all dead orthodoxy, and next to the purity of doctrine and a Scriptural administration

of the sacraments it lays all stress upon showing the faith *in a Christian life.* It emphasizes true conversion, repentance and faith by personal assurance of salvation and a godly life. It has from its beginning tried to enforce *strict church discipline* in its congregations, and their constitutions require of those who seek to be admitted to membership evidence of a Christian life. Such discipline it also endeavors to enforce in regard to *Secret Societies,* against which its congregations are earnestly warned. In all relations of Christian and church life it urges the necessity of showing the true faith in good works; in rendering aid to its needy members, widows and orphans, in the work of Home and Foreign Missions, and in fostering a proper arrangement of Christian worship, and a right development of congregational and churchly life in general. From the beginning the Synod has designated this tendency as a striving after a more perfect development of the Lutheran Church. Although we must lament that in all these points the ideal aimed at has not as yet been attained, nevertheless the Synod is still striving for this object with untiring zeal. It also is striving after a growth in richer and deeper knowledge, but only on the basis of the Symbols under the guidance of the Divine Word.

If, therefore, on the one hand, the Synod decidedly rejects every imaginary progress and every so-called development of the dogma antagonistic to

the Confession, it acknowledges on the other hand as true progress and development in the right direction all development that grows out of this principle and stays within the limits of the same. To such progress the Synod is open, for such there is room in it, and within these limits it is striving for a greater perfection.

2. Out of this fundamental confessional position of the Iowa Synod there necessarily results the attitude it has assumed in the several controversies in which it has been involved. The organization of the Iowa Synod was caused by the fact that the Missouri Synod in its controversy with the Synod of Buffalo concerning the *Church and the Ministry,* would no longer suffer in its midst nor admit to its membership the men sent by Loehe who could not agree with Missouri's view. Then, as they could neither side with Buffalo nor with Missouri, they commenced a new, independent activity farther west. Thus the Synod found itself in its very incipiency involved in a doctrinal controversy in which the principal point between itself and Missouri was the so-called *Uebertragungslehre,* the doctrine concerning the conferring the office upon the minister. The Iowa Synod rejected the view according to which the ministerial office is derived from the invisible Church, that it is originally vested in the individual members of the same in their spiritual priesthood, and by them conferred upon the ministers of the Church through their vocation to the

Holy Office. The Iowa Synod agreed with Missouri in so far as it taught that the Holy Office was originally and directly given by God to the Church, but differed from Missouri in so far as it maintained that the Office was given to the Church in its totality, not to its single members, and that the Church possessed the Office in and with the means of grace, not in the spiritual priesthood and in the state of grace of its true members. And if the conferring of the Office takes place in accordance with a regular call by a single congregation, it is not on account of the true members of the invisible Church that may be hidden in it, but because the Church, which in its totality possesses the Office and which is as well invisible communion of the Spirit as visible communion of the means of grace, is in its totality and essence existing even in the smallest individual congregation, where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus. The principal interest which the Iowa Synod had in this controversy was, however, to *assert the principle* that it is sufficient for church unity to agree in the doctrine of the Confession that the Office was given to the Church, not to single persons, and that a difference of opinion as to the farther theological exposition of this doctrine does not destroy the unity of faith and confession, and that it, therefore, must not stand in the way of a mutual recognition as brethren in the faith. This is the *position of the Synod* in the controversy concerning the Holy Office. It is evident

at a glance that this is merely the consequence of its attitude to the Confessions.

3. Quite a similar position the Synod has taken concerning the doctrine of the Millennium. This controversy also was forced upon it from the outside. When Chiliasm, which had formerly been tolerated by the Missouri Synod, was proscribed by it, and the Rev. Schieferdecker expelled, the latter applied to the Iowa Synod, and asked whether they considered him a heretic, who must be denied church-fellowship on account of his views of the Millennium. As the Synod, according to its confessional standpoint, answered this question negatively, it was accused of holding an un-Lutheran view with regard to the Millennium. This compelled the Synod to defend its position on this question, and to explain *the kind* of eschatological opinions or doctrines for which it claimed the toleration of the Church. It protested against the insinuation that this presentation of the doctrines of the Conversion of Israel, of Antichrist, and his destruction at the Second Coming of Christ, of the Millennium and the First Resurrection, were a *Synodical Confession,* and that, consequently, Chiliasm was made a Synodical dogma. Only what the Confessions state on the Last Things it wanted to have considered as its own Confession. Accordingly it *rejected* every view of the Millennium by which the spiritual kingdom of God during that period would be made an outward worldly kingdom and in which the Church would not be essentially

and principally a communion of faith; in general—every view according to which there would be another way of salvation in that period than in the present. On the other hand, Synod *declared* that it could not reject the doctrines mentioned above, concerning the Conversion of Israel, etc., as heresies which would destroy church-fellowship, as long as they were free from the characteristics of a fanatical view of Chiliasm as given in the Symbols. So long as such fanatical views were not entertained, it declared there was room in the Synod for these opinions as well as for the opposing anti-Chiliastic ones, and in such difference of opinion it could not see a prejudice to the necessary unity of faith. Its reason for taking this position was that, in this case, the point in question was not the dogma, but theological problems, in regard to which, notwithstanding the fullest harmony in the Confessions, there may be a difference of opinion. On account of such differences, church fellowship, which rests only upon the Confession itself, must not be denied.

4. The doctrines of the Conversion of Israel, the Millennium and the First Resurrection, are not referred to in any of the Symbolical statements. But the Antichrist is spoken of at different places, and the Smalcald Articles declare, not only occasionally, but directly, that the Pope is the true *Antichrist*. The Iowa Synod has, therefore, been claimed as being in direct opposition to the Confessions, because it does not see the Antichrist solely and exclusively

in the Pope, but declares that the opinion may be tolerated in the Church according to which a personal Antichrist is to be expected in the Last Times. But also on this question the Iowa Synod fully accepts all the declarations of the Confessions. They do, however, not teach that the Antichrist is solely and exclusively the Pope. The Confessions do not teach that the Antichrist is the Pope, but that the Pope is the Antichrist; and far from seeing the Antichrist exclusively in the Pope, they rather state in another place that popery is a *part* of the Antichrist's kingdom. The statement that popery is an entire subversion of Christianity, consequently antichristendom, as prophesied in Holy Scripture, is indeed just as much a part of the confession of faith as the rejection of false doctrine. But the questions whether Antichrist be a collective term only or also an individual person, whether the prophecy concerning the same be wholly fulfilled, or whether some future fulfillment is yet to be expected, are exegetical problems which have not been considered by the Confessions. The Iowa Synod does not, therefore, disagree with the Confessions, when, on the one hand, it accepts all the assertions covering the antichristian character of popery, and, on the other hand, regards the questions mentioned above as open ones, without a confessional character, and, therefore, without affecting the unity of the Church, tolerates the opinion that Antichrist is yet to be expected, along with that

that the Roman Pontiff is exclusively Antichrist.

5. The position which the Iowa Synod has taken in these controverted questions is only the natural consequence of the principle which even without regard to its special application it professes in general, *i. e.*, the recognition of *Open Questions*. The more earnestly it emphasizes over against unionism, the necessity of agreement in doctrine for Church unity, and declares it to be absolutely necessary to church-fellowship, the more earnest also are its endeavors to avoid sectarian exaggeration. The Augsburg Confession declares: "To the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the Sacraments," that is, to agree in the doctrine of salvation and of faith. Herein is implied the further declaration that an agreement must not necessarily exist in such doctrines which are not doctrines of faith. The Iowa Synod accordingly *declares* that for church-fellowship there must be required *no absolute* agreement in doctrine, but only an agreement in the doctrine of faith; but this, indeed, in the *whole* doctrine of faith, and in *all* its articles. This doctrine of faith forms the contents of the Confessions, and, consequently, the sum total of the doctrines of the Confessions is the indispensable extent of agreement in doctrine. There must not be inferred from this, however, that these doctrines are indispensable and binding doctrines of faith because they are found in the Symbols of

the Church, and that the decision of the Church which is expressed by the Symbols gives them the value and validity of divinely certain and binding doctrines of salvation. On the contrary, the Church has laid them down in its Confessions only because they are the doctrines of Scripture on which saving faith depends. On the other hand, the Iowa Synod *rejects* the opinion that an agreement also in such doctrines of Scripture which are no doctrines of faith, be *conditio sine qua non* of church-fellowship, and that church-fellowship must be dissolved on their account. If there be agreement in all other respects in the doctrine of the Confessions, and there only remains a difference in other points, the Synod will tolerate this and regard them as open questions. This does not mean that we should not strive for agreement even in such doctrines as *e. g., Uebertragungslehre,* Conversion of Israel, Antichrist, etc., or that theological controversies concerning them are useless and harmful. Neither are they, by styling them open questions, declared to be doubtful and uncertain doctrines, concerning which a definite and certain persuasion cannot be attained, and by no means does this import that they could arbitrarily be adopted or rejected. But this only is the meaning of that expression that these doctrines, on which there is in fact a diversity of opinion even among those who fully agree in the Confessions, must not be regarded as *church-dividing,* and that a

difference of their conception can be allowed, because they are not doctrines of faith, and from their very nature there can be no certainty of faith concerning them, since they are not as clearly and distinctly taught in Scripture as the doctrine of faith. The Iowa Synod has mainly been induced to hold this position by the earnest desire to prevent the doctrinal and confessional basis of the Lutheran Church from being rendered doubtful in its divine certainty by having mixed with it merely theological views and opinions, and from having destroyed thereby its fundamental character, according to which it forms or dissolves church-fellowship.

6. Whilst the Iowa Synod will not suffer anything to be added to this basis, it objects also to having anything taken away, and will not allow any doctrine of the Confessions to be made an open question. On account of this position the Synod was moved to take the stand which it has held in the *Predestinarian controversy.* Soon after the Missourian Predestinarianism had appeared for the first time in 1868, the Iowa Synod opposed it and repudiated it as a deviation from the doctrine of the Confessions. The Synod was well aware that even in the doctrine of Predestination there were points which must be considered open questions; *e. g.,* the distinction made between election in its wider or stricter sense, as well as between *voluntas antecedens* and *consequens,* the teaching that election has taken place *intuitu fidei,* implying

that faith is the condition or the instrumental or the subordinate impulsive cause of election, etc. But from the very beginning Predestinarianism was pronounced by the Synod to be apostasy from the Confessions and a church-dividing error. The Iowa Synod by no means holds that Predestination signifies only the general decree to save all men through faith in Christ, which God eternally has decreed, but it teaches that it really is an *individual* Predestination, and if a man is saved, it avows this to be the *effect* of this decree on him, and the cause thereof to be no other than this eternal, effective, gracious will of God, and in no way man's own will, self-determination and merit. But it condemns the doctrine that Predestination of individuals or election is a decree essentially *different from the universal decree* of grace which God has decreed *outside* of and *aside* of and *in addition* to the universal one, so that there be found in God a contradicting will, a universal one and one not universal. Over against this it maintains that individual Predestination has taken place *within* the universal decree of God, is contained in it, and is *no other will* than this same universal decree itself, however with a *special reference,* namely, inasmuch as it refers to the children of God in special, as they are known by God before the foundation of the world. It prefers that mode of teaching which represents Predestination as the applying of the universal decree to the individual, in whom it becomes realized, which works his salva-

tion and everything thereto pertaining, consequently also the saving faith, and prefers it because by this mode also the comforting power of predestination is rendered prominent. It also allows, however, the other mode of teaching, which takes Predestination in its narrower sense, strictly as the election of a definite number of certain men from the great mass of reprobates, if there be also taught that Predestination in this sense has taken place *intuitu fidei*. The Synod, however, rejects the opinion that a discriminating selection of some before others has been made *without regard* to man's conduct, merely according to the pleasure of the will of God, and holds that this can be asserted of Predestination only when it is taken in accordance with the mode of teaching mentioned in the first place, as the universal decree referring and applied to individuals. And whilst it asserts Predestination in the latter meaning to be the *source* of our salvation as well as of *our faith* and our persevering in the same, it denies that Predestination, being taken merely as selection, is the *cause* of some believing and others abiding in unbelief. It rejects the opinion that even the most obdurate resistance of those who were ordained by this selection will not hinder it from making them believers and save them, and maintains, on the contrary, that the obdurate resistance of the reprobates, which God has foreknown, has prevented Him from predestinating them in His eternal decree. It disowns the opinion that the effect of uni-

versal grace is indeed exhibited and manifested in the faith of those who believe for a time, but that perseverance in faith is the effect of selecting grace alone. And concerning the appeal to the secret will of God, the Iowa Synod unreservedly recognizes the manifold unsearchable problems which pertain to it, but denies that the cause of God's not having elected all men and of His not taking away the resistance even from the reprobates is His secret will, according to which He will not do with them what He does with His elect, since it is distinctly revealed that the cause thereof is not in God, but in the persevering self-hardening of man. On the other hand, it is, indeed, concealed in the secret foreknowledge of God *who* of those who are called will believe, and *who* not, and *who* of the converted will persevere and *who* will not. And as God has reserved these secrets for his wisdom, and has not revealed them, according to the doctrine of the Iowa Synod, the elect can, indeed, be *absolutely* sure of their election and preservation on the part of God, but not on their part of their persevering in faith, because the revelation of the decree of Predestination on which rests the certainty of perseverance of the elect runs thus, that God would support His work in them to the end, *if* they observe God's Word, pray diligently, abide in God's goodness, and faithfully use the gifts received. This is the position the Iowa Synod holds in regard to Predestinationism at large, and in its particulars, and in this manner it has endeavored to

enforce the Confessions as the indispensable foundation of doctrine also in this special point over against Predestinarianism, which is fundamentally opposed to the same.

7. In a different manner it has pursued this aim, by taking the position which it holds in regard to the *General Council.* In consequence of its confessional principles it hailed with joy the attempt to unite the Lutheran Church of our country on the basis of the Confessions, the *whole* of the Confessions, and the Confessions *alone.* Though it would have preferred a Free Conference as a preliminary step, yet it was not averse to the idea of founding a General Council, when from another quarter it was claimed that this was complying with a deep-felt want, and that the necessary conditions therefor existed. According to its principles of Confession, however, it could join such a General Body only if the same would recognize also the Lutheran Confessions as the Church-uniting and Church-dividing basis, and repudiate mixed communion and exchange of pulpits with those of another faith. The General Council, however, was not prepared to do this, and the Iowa Synod accordingly was compelled to defer its full connection with the same. It did, however, not withdraw entirely, but entered into a relation to it which had been provided for by the constitution of the General Council, and by which the Synod was enabled to take part not only in its foreign missionary, liturgical work, etc., but

also in the debates on the topics of Mixed Communion and Exchange of Pulpits, which, since that time, for a number of years took place at the conventions of the General Council. At all times its exertions were directed to demonstrating the principle of the indispensable restriction of church-fellowship to those who are of the same faith as is implied in the acceptance of the same Confessions and in the holding of the same confessional basis. The Synod was and is persuaded that it adds no new condition of church-fellowship at all to the Confessions, but that it merely asserts the inevitable consequence of the same, which is directly contained therein. For the participating in the confessional act of celebrating the Lord's Supper is a *real and very emphatic confession,* and the *principle* that only those who are of the same household of faith may partake of it, whilst those of another faith must be excluded, is nothing else but the "we believe and profess," "we reject and condemn," of the Confessions themselves in their *direct application to ecclesiastical practice.* The Iowa Synod was well aware that the bad custom of mixed communion and exchange of pulpits which has crept in would not at once everywhere be discontinued, and that such deviations from the principle occurring now and then within the limits of the different Synods should be no reason against entering into a closer union with them. But the acknowledgment of the principle that church-fellowship—fellowship in the

Lord's Supper and the pulpit—could be claimed and granted only on the basis of unity in Confession, it declared to be indispensable, since it pertained to the necessary confessional basis. On this account the different and successive declarations of the General Council, though the Iowa Synod would not hesitate to acknowledge the progress made, did not suffice, as they rather dwelt on the pastoral duty in regard to the application of this principle and the dealing with exceptions, instead of unreservedly confessing this principle itself. Not before the clear and plain Confession of the Swedish Augustana Synod concerning this question had been endorsed by the General Council at Galesburg, in 1875, and the rule: "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only," had been declared to be founded upon *the Word of God and the Confessions* of our Church, did the Iowa Synod hold that the confessional principle was recognized, which at Fort Wayne, in 1867, it had urged as the indispensable condition on which the official union of Synods might be effected. This Galesburg rule was strongly opposed in different parts of the General Council. The proceedings, however, which took place at the successive meetings of the General Council, and which were based upon the theses of the sainted Dr. Krauth, who treated the question of altar and pulpit fellowship with incomparable clearness, served to foster the expectation that this opposition

would be overcome more and more, and the Galesburg rule gain universal and approved acceptance. The Iowa Synod already declared that it was hindered no longer from organically uniting with the General Council by confessional scruples, as at Galesburg the Confessional principle, which it considered to be indispensable, had been adopted. Since that time, however, within the General Council things seem to have undergone a change. The understanding of the Galesburg rule, as the official acknowledgment of the principle set forth by the Iowa Synod at Fort Wayne, has repeatedly and very emphatically been opposed by very influential parties, and declined by them in the name of the General Council. These declarations have, indeed, been contradicted just as emphatically by other parties. But since they have not yet been renounced by the General Council itself, the Iowa Synod is induced to be more cautious in asserting that the necessary conditions for full Church union exist. It is now waiting for further development within the General Council, still hoping for a final official declaration in favor of the Confessional principle of unmixed communion and pulpit-fellowship. Whatever this final decision may be, this principle is the indispensable condition of all Church union for the Iowa Synod, in accordance with its position to the Confessions.

8. Similarly as regarding doctrine and church-fellowship, the Confessions are also the decisive

norm of all *ecclesiastical orders and rights.* In this the Synod has maintained the connection with the older Lutheran Church, and preserved ecclesiastical tradition, as well as taken in account the circumstances of our country.

First of all, the Synod is taking pains to ground and confirm the necessary agreement in faith and confession by *a thorough instruction* in the doctrine of the Church, to which end it emphasizes a careful catechetical instruction aside from the sermon. It urges not only scrupulous instruction by pastors of the catechumens, but also the fostering and upbuilding of those who have been confirmed. It does not neglect Sunday schools; it desires simply to have them conducted in a strictly Lutheran way. It prefers, however, the reliable and well-approved Church examinations (Christenlehre), and will not have them ranked below the Sunday school. It also lays great stress on the establishment of parochial schools, and insists on its members sending their children to the same up to the time of their confirmation, as a conscientious duty. Where congregations are yet too small to support parochial teachers, the ministers give instruction in these schools, where special attention is paid to religious instruction. It does not take this course in opposition to the public schools. These are rather considered a great blessing for our civil life and an indispensable institution of our country, which must vigorously be supported against Romish assaults. But since

the baptism of infants comprises the obligation of an education in the faith, and the Sunday school instruction is not sufficient for this purpose, Lutheran parents can make use of schools where religion cannot be taught for their baptized children only when the instruction required by baptism has been brought to a close in confirmation.

Also, in respect to the *Order of Service* and Ministerial Acts, the Synod strives to sustain the connection with the Old Church and her liturgical usages, considering, however, at the same time, the circumstances and wants of the time present. From the very beginning Loehe's Agenda has been used in its congregations, whose liturgy is essentially the same as that of the Church Book of the General Council, with whose liturgical principles it is in perfect harmony. This liturgical form is regarded the ideal to which the congregations ought to be brought up, but the Synod claims no governmental powers towards introducing it, and will sooner bear diversity in this respect than injure the liturgical liberty of the individual congregations, contrary to the Confessions of the Church. On this account it also does not insist upon the establishment of Private Confession under all circumstances, but where it cannot be established it only persists the more strenuously in personally giving notice of one's intention to partake of the Lord's Supper, that the examination may take place of which the Confession speaks.

Its *Synodical and congregational organization,*

lastly, is based upon the Symbolical fundamental principle that all ecclesiastical power be given to the Church principally and immediately, as the same is ecclesiastically represented even in the smallest local church. It, therefore, acknowledges no other governmental power of the Synod, but that which has been conferred upon the same by the individual congregations, and it assumes not more than advisory power in regard to congregational affairs. The oversight of its congregations and pastors, with which it is entrusted, is put in practice, among other things, by visitations, which regularly take place biennially. It strenuously enforces what is *juris divini* in the Church order. It rejects the license system, the calling for a certain time, etc., and acknowledges but a regular call by election on the part of the congregation (the President of the Synod either proposing for election or ratifying the same) and by ordination and installation on the part of the Synod. The annual conventions of its district Synods are composed of the pastors as the representatives of the Ministerium and of one lay delegate for every Synodical congregation as representatives of the same. To the conventions of the General Synod, which occur every three years, six ministers and six congregations send one representative respectively. A standing Executive Committee, or "Synodal Ausschuss," represents the entire Synod during the time intervening between its conventions.

The General Council

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THE General Council makes no claim of comprising within itself all truly Lutheran Synods and churches in America. Nor, if we understand it, does it have any such aim. There is no such thing as a "General Council Lutheran Church." There may be those who have regarded it as destined to supplant or merge within itself all other general bodies, but we are sure that this is not its spirit. Its great purpose is the development of the Lutheran Church of this country, in accordance with the principles of Confessional and Historical Lutheranism. It affords the means whereby any number of Synods that have been brought to a real understanding and a hearty appreciation of each other's position, as true and consistent adherents of the faith confessed at Augsburg, may coöperate harmoniously, until the time come for a wider and more general union. It is pledged to the maintenance of distinctive Lutheranism. Whether

this require the permanence of any one particular organization, call it General Council, or General Synod, or Synodical Conference, or anything else, is a matter of relative indifference. It makes no war, therefore, upon any other general body, anxious though it is that all who confess the same faith should recognize and coöperate with one another. It seeks to interfere with the work of no Synods or congregations or individuals claiming to be Lutheran, but not choosing to unite with it. It simply demands that its own work shall be accorded similar respect; and that all who claim recognition as Lutherans do no injury to the common cause by betraying well-established Lutheran principles. It has embodied its entire conception of the nature, modes, conditions and obligations of Church organization in most clear and explicit terms in its "Fundamental Principles of Faith and Church Polity." A statement of these "Fundamental Principles," with a brief exposition of their meaning, will afford the best means of understanding the General Council's position. "The Principles of Faith" are:

"I. There must be and abide through all time, one Holy Christian Church, which is the assembly of all believers, among whom the Gospel is purely preached, and the Holy Sacraments administered, as the Gospel demands.

"To the true unity of the Church, it is sufficient that there be agreement touching the doctrine of the Gospel, that it be preached in one accord in its pure sense, and that the sacraments be administered conformably to God's Word."

This is Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, as it reads in the German text. It affords the definition of the Church, as properly speaking, not an external, visible body, but the sum total of all believers, whoever and wherever they be, "the Communion of Saints," as the Apostles' Creed confesses, or as Luther, in the Smalcald Articles declares: "Thank God, to-day a child seven years old knows what the Church is, viz: saints, believers and lambs, who hear the voice of their Shepherd;" or Melanchthon in the Apology: "This Church exists, viz: the truly believing and righteous men scattered throughout the whole world."

It gives the marks of the Church as "the pure preaching of the Word, and the right administration of the sacraments." For wherever there is true faith there must be also a confession of this faith; and conversely, wherever God gives his Word, the Holy Spirit is ever active and begets a true people of God. God's Word can never be without God's people, or God's people without God's Word. While the Church properly speaking is not visible, and no one can draw the line dividing precisely the believing from the unbelieving, nevertheless, wherever these marks appear, we are sure that the Church is present, even though many externally connected with it be hypocrites. The purity of the preaching also has its degrees. As the Word of God is always efficacious, even

when accompanied by error, it is impossible to determine the extent to which such purity may be only relative where a Church really exists. The purer the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, the purer the Church, the firmer its foundations, the more faithful its testimony, and the more efficacious its work.

If the Church, therefore, be properly the true people of God, the unity of the Church consists in the bond of common faith in Christ, which, by uniting them with Him, unites them also with one another. This unity is promoted by all that strengthens faith in Christ and His word. It is retarded by all that weakens such faith, or recedes from the Gospel. The external expression of this unity consists neither in external organization, whether under a hierarchy, as the Papacy, or in a confederacy of denominations—or Synods; nor in the use of identical ceremonies or forms of worship, however serviceable this may be in promoting good order and a common understanding. "Agreement touching the doctrine of the Gospel," which includes the right administration of the sacraments, is the prime requisite of Church unity and Church union. For in the doctrine of the Gospel we hear Christ's voice, and as every one follows that voice, one impulse from one Spirit influences the entire body, and even without knowing or hearing of one another, "they speak the same thing," and are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10).

"II. The true unity of a particular Church, in virtue of which men are truly members of one and the same Church, and by which any Church abides in real identity, and is entitled to a continuation of her name, is unity in doctrine and faith and in the sacraments."

A distinction between a universal and a particular Church is here affirmed. Different degrees of purity in the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, different degrees of accuracy in defining the doctrines of God's Word and expressing the contents of the one common faith, the exaltation of adiaphora into matters of essential importance, the depreciation of matters of essential importance into adiaphora, the determination of forms of Church government as indispensable conditions of Church unity, even the limitations determined by national or linguistic lines, explain the division of the Church universal into particular churches. But whatever be the principle according to which the separate existence of any particular Church has been established, what is true of the Church Universal is true also of all its parts. Its unity is a "unity in doctrine and faith and in the sacraments." This is further explained:

"That she continues to teach and to set forth, and that her true members embrace from the heart, and use, the articles of faith and the sacraments, as they were held and administered when the Church came into distinctive being and received a distinctive name."

When she teaches otherwise than they taught

who were her historical ancestors, she has broken her unity with them, and is no longer the same Church, no difference though the name be retained, or however preponderant on her side may be numerical majorities. If every member would agree to a change in her Creed, this would not change the testimony of the communion which was fixed at its organization. It would only show that the historical successor was a different Church. The Roman Catholic Church cannot amend the decrees of the Council of Trent, so as to remove elements on which the Tridentine fathers insisted, or to include Protestant conceptions of doctrine, without thereby ceasing to be the same Church as that which for three centuries and a half has recognized those decrees as the standard of teaching, and excluded from the hope of salvation all who disputed their authority. Every particular Church stands for a particular statement or type of doctrine; and the life of that particular Church is maintained or perishes, as the statement or type of doctrine of that particular Church is maintained or surrendered.

"III. The unity of the Church is intrusted to, and made manifest in the solemn, public and official Confessions, which are set forth, to wit: The generic unity of the Christian Church in the general Creeds, and the specific unity of pure parts of the Christian Church in their specific Creeds: one chief object of both classes of which Creeds is, that Christians who are in the unity of faith may know each other as such, and may have a visible bond of fellowship."

"IV. That Confessions may be such a testimony of unity, and bond of union, they must be accepted in every statement of doctrine, in their own true, native, original and only sense. Those who set them forth and use them, must not only agree to use the same words, but must use and understand these words in one and the same sense."

The Confessions, as visible bonds of fellowship, are articles of agreement among those who subscribe them. Like all other contracts, to be of any value, they must be expressed in clear and unambiguous terms. A contract that is capable of being understood in two or more senses by the parties who subscribe it, is utterly worthless, and need not be signed, so far as any value either party to the contract derives from it. An article of agreement, whether in Civil Law or in Church Organization, reaches its end only when both parties understand its terms "in one and the same sense." To ask men to sign a document, with the understanding that the meaning intended to be conveyed by those who framed it need not be accepted, but that every one is free to attach to it his own interpretation, is an attempt to defeat the very end for which the document was framed. It is equivalent to using bushels of varying capacities, or yard-sticks of different lengths. The famous Tract XCI., by the late Cardinal Newman, was an effort to show how men could subscribe the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, and put upon them a Romanizing interpretation, *i. e.*, remain in the Church of England while being at heart Romanists. The

effort is here made to prevent any such procedure in the churches uniting in the General Council. It is not subscription to Confessions of faith that is desired, so much as to the faith of the Confessions. The unity of the Church does not consist in subscription to the same Confessions, but in the acceptance and teaching of the same doctrines. Where the doctrines of the Confessions are not believed, it is the solemn duty of the person who questions them to testify on all occasions against them, instead of seeking to hide his dissent under an ambiguous or indefinite formula. The right of private judgment must be constantly guaranteed; but this right demands that Confessions shall be subscribed only after they have been tested by the study of the Holy Scripture, and their entire Scriptural character has been determined. In other words, "that Confessions be a bond of union," they must be recognized as the expressions of an agreement that is deeper and firmer than that of the mere document that is recognized and subscribed.

"V. The unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as a portion of the Holy Christian Church, depends upon her abiding in one and the same faith, in confessing which she obtained her distinctive name, her political recognition, and her history."

Thus it is explicitly declared, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church does not contain all Christians, but is only a portion of the Holy Christian Church. We know of no one in the

General Council who has ever taught otherwise. Should there, however, at any time be such a one among us, his teaching would directly contradict a principle, which the General Council requires every Synod uniting with it to adopt.

But where the faith of the Lutheran Church is amended or modified, while the bounds of the Holy Christian Church may not be transcended, the unity of Lutheranism is undoubtedly broken. If the faith be not the same faith which gave the Lutheran Church its distinctive position, just in so far there is no unity with the Lutheran Church. However high the position which a teacher may be accorded within what calls itself the Lutheran Church, if he hold and teach *e. g.* that original sin is not truly sin, or that Christ has not made a sacrifice for all the sins of men, or that some merit is connected with human preparations for God's grace, or that the Holy Spirit does not ordinarily work through the Word and sacraments, or that faith is sometimes without good works, or that some other requirements besides agreement concerning the Gospel and sacraments are necessary to the unity of the Church, or that no grace is offered in Baptism, or that there is no real presence in the Holy Supper, etc., he has broken the unity of the Lutheran Church. If all our general bodies, viz., General Synod, General Council, Synodical Conference, United Synod, Ohio, Iowa, Norwegian Conference, etc., were to unite in a unanimous re-

jection of some distinctive feature of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation period, they could not change the faith and confession of the Lutheran Church, but would simply demonstrate that in such action these bodies were no longer Lutheran, but had broken with the unity of the Lutheran Church. The unity of the Lutheran, as a particular Church, is found only in consistent adherence to her historical position, and in progress on the lines of her historical development.

"VI. The unaltered Augsburg Confession is by preëminence the Confession of that faith. The acceptance of its doctrines and the avowal of them without equivocation or mental reservation, make, mark and identify that Church which alone in the true, original, historical and honest sense of the term is the Evangelical Lutheran Church."

It is well to notice that it is not the acceptance of the unaltered Augsburg Confession, but the acceptance of its *doctrines*, which determines the Lutheran character of a teacher or Church body. A man who has never subscribed the Augsburg Confession, or even never seen it, is a Lutheran, if he teach the doctrines which it maintains. A man who makes his subscription to the Confession an object of especial boast, is no Lutheran, if "by equivocation or mental reservation," or even by excusable misunderstanding, he depart from any of the doctrines therein clearly and professedly taught. He may hold or not hold to additional confessions; he may see or may deny their importance. The

question as to whether he be a Lutheran or not, the General Council affirms, must be decided from his relation to the doctrines of the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and from no other standard whatever. "The *doctrines* of the unaltered Augsburg Confession—nothing more, nothing less." This is all that the General Council demands, as the test of what is Lutheran. Hence its "principles" continue:

"VII. The only Churches, therefore, of any land, which are properly in the unity of that communion, and by consequence entitled to its name, Evangelical Lutheran, are those which sincerely hold and truthfully confess the doctrines of the unaltered Augsburg Confession.

"VIII. We accept and acknowledge the doctrines of the unaltered Augsburg Confession in its original sense, as throughout in conformity with the pure truth of which God's Word is the only rule. We accept its statements of truth as in perfect accordance with the canonical Scriptures. We reject the errors it condemns, and believe that all which it commits to the liberty of the Church, of right belongs to that liberty."

But while thus maintaining that the acceptance of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession is enough to decide the Lutheran character of a teacher or a Church or a Synod, nevertheless, where the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession have been called into question and involved in controversy, and where the Confession has been subscribed by those who disbelieved and doubted its doctrines, and who attempted to justify their subscription upon the plea that they were at liberty

to make their own interpretation of the meaning of the Confession, and that the Confession could be properly subscribed at the same time by parties holding diverse views of what it meant, it has at times become necessary to restate the doctrines of the unaltered Confession in ampler Confessions. These add nothing to the Augsburg Confession, but only guard it from ambiguities. The arguments and illustrations which they give are not the proper objects of the subscription. All that is to be determined is the true meaning of the Augsburg Confession. As the entire principle of Confessional subscription, according to which Confessions, as contracts, are to be understood only in the sense given them by those who first published them, has been so often violated with respect to the Augsburg Confession, it becomes necessary for the Church to know, with respect to each of its ministers, as to what is the construction which he puts upon it. Hence the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Catechisms of Luther and the Formula of Concord, are adopted as consistent exhibitions and defences of the doctrines taught in the Fundamental Confession. The last of these "Principles," therefore, is:

"IX. In thus formally accepting and acknowledging the unaltered Augsburg Confession, we declare our conviction that the other Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, inasmuch as they set forth none other than its system of doctrine, and articles of faith, are of necessity pure and Scriptural."

This sentence must be placed alongside of Principle VII above given. By "other Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," those are meant "which sincerely hold and truthfully confess the doctrines of the unaltered Augsburg Confession." Any one familiar with the Lutheran "Church Orders," whose confession has been made the standard of the "Common Service" by General Synod, General Council and United Synod, can give an account of the doctrinal formulas which are included in most of them, intended to promote the pure teaching of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession in the respective Lutheran countries for which the "Orders" were prepared. They are examples of the "other Confessions." All such Confessions, then, as harmonize with the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, the General Council acknowledges as "of necessity pure and Scriptural." All Confessions, whether of the Lutheran name or not, that do not harmonize therewith, it rejects and condemns.

"Preëminent among such accordant, pure and Scriptural statements of doctrine, by their intrinsic excellence, by the great and necessary ends for which they were prepared, by their historical position, and by the general judgment of the Church, are these: the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Catechisms of Luther and the Formula of Concord, all of which are, with the unaltered Augsburg Confession, in the perfect harmony of one and the same Scriptural faith."

This reference to the full body of Confessions

contained in the "Book of Concord" is intended for the ministry, and not for the laity. It is understood that greater demands must be made of a public teacher than of private members, of professors of theology than of pastors; just as in civil life, only those "learned in the law" are competent for positions as judges, or even as attorneys, and, therefore, must be subjected to a special examination. It is presupposed that every candidate for the Lutheran ministry has spent sufficient time in preparation for his work to learn the history of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession in their relation to subsequent controversies and to be ready to declare where a statement of the results of those controversies can be found.

Taking the fullest of these Confessions, the Formula of Concord, as an example, we may briefly review its office and significance. 1. It teaches that consistency with the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession requires us, on the one hand, to reject the view that, since the fall, man's nature is sin, and on the other, to teach that it is not sin, but sinful. Who will dispute the correctness of this teaching? Who would defend, as a true adherent of the Augsburg Confession, one who would teach that the nature that Christ assumed was in itself sin? There is here no addition to the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession; but only an application of one of these doctrines to a stated controversy. 2. It teaches the complete inability of unregener-

ate man in spiritual things, and that conversion is entirely the work of the Holy Ghost. Who that accepts Article XVIII of the Augsburg Confession can decide otherwise? Here again there is nothing but the application of a doctrine of the Augsburg Confession to a stated controversy. 3. It teaches that the righteousness which avails before God for our forgiveness, is only that which Christ wrought for us in his divinely human person, and that this righteousness is received only by faith, and that faith is not mere historical knowledge, but a divinely wrought energy in man. Can any one who has studied the Augsburg Confession detect in this any inconsistency with its doctrines? Again we have only the application of the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession to stated controversies. 4. Good works inevitably follow faith in Christ, and such an expression as that "they are injurious to salvation" should be condemned. 5. The Law convicts of sin; the Gospel alone brings grace and pardon. 6. The Law has three uses: (a) For outward discipline; (b) to convict of sin; (c) as a rule of life to the regenerate. 7. The Body and Blood of Christ are truly present with the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and are orally received, not in a natural, but in a supernatural and sacramental manner by all who partake, so as to strengthen the faith of even the weakest of believing communicants, and to bring judgment upon impenitent and unbelieving communicants.

8. The human nature of Christ by its union with the divine actually participates in the power and majesty of the divine nature; and although, during his humiliation, the human nature abstained from the full use of these communicated gifts, since it is exalted to the Right Hand of God, the human nature now fully exercises all that the divine imparts to it. This is only a somewhat more explicit statement of what is taught in Article III of the Augsburg Confession. 9. Christ's descent to hell belongs to his triumph. How this occurred should not be investigated; like all other mysteries, its solution should be awaited until the next world. 10. The Church of God of every time and place has the power, according to circumstances, to change its ceremonies in such manner as is most edifying; ceremonies not commanded in Holy Scripture are in themselves no part of the service of God; but in time of persecution, matters which in themselves are indifferent, may, because of their relations, become essential. This is simply a repetion and application of Article XXVI of the Augsburg Confession. 11. The doctrine concerning election must be learned not from the secret will of God, but from the Gospel, and every element included in the way of salvation taught in the Gospel enters into the decree of election. This is mentioned already in Article V. of the Augsburg Confession. 12. The last article groups together the rejection of numerous false propositions. We ask:

Is it consistent with the Augsburg Confesion, or is it not, to teach "Christ did not assume body and blood of the Virgin Mary, but brought them with him from heaven?" Is it adding to the Augsburg Confession to say plainly that such is not the teaching of those who subscribe it? Or what of the second error condemned: "Christ is not true God, but only has more gifts than any other man?" Or the third: "Our righteousness before God consists in renewal and our own godliness?" Or the fourth: "Unbaptized children are not sinners before God?" Or the fifth: "Children should not be baptized until they have attained their reason?" Some one advances the opinion: "That is no true Christian congregation wherein sinners are still found," and insists that, according to his interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, such a view is not condemned, and, therefore, he must have freedom as a Lutheran minister to proclaim it. Dare the churches which profess the Augsburg Confession be hindered from being faithful to their trust in framing an explicit declaration whereby their condemnation of such error may be known? or are they disloyal to the Augsburg Confession in so doing? Or whenever some specific error, either in doctrine or morals, arises that threatens to overthrow the faith, or at least to disturb and confuse Christian people, is it not rather the plain duty of the professed teachers of the Church to sound the note of alarm against it, even

though they have to use somewhat different phraseology from that of the Church's fundamental Confession?

The General Council, by this proposition, in no way questions the Lutheran character of those who actually hold to and firmly maintain all the doctrines of Unaltered Augsburg Confession, even though they may have some difficulties concerning the policy of the ecclesiastical endorsement of the other Confessions; but, at the same time, it indicates that the only hope of abiding harmony is found, in not ignoring the experience through which the Lutheran Church has passed in maintaining the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, but in keeping ever in mind the application of these doctrines that had to be made by the other Confessions, in order to save the Lutheran Church from hopeless discord and confusion.

In so doing it entered no new path, but followed the consistent development of Lutheran Theology, as exhibited not only in the great theologians of our Church, but especially in such earnest and well-matured practical Christians and Church-organizers as Arndt and Spener, August Hermann Francke and Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who clearly recognized the new demands made by new issues forced upon the Lutheran Church, in the confession of the Scriptural faith of Augsburg in the ampler Confessions.

Among these issues, one of the principal arose

from the fact that the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, confirmed by the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, guaranteed to Protestants freedom of religious worship upon the sole condition of subscription to the Augsburg Confession. Repeatedly Reformed theologians and princes, who protested against the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church, signed the Augsburg Confession and were allowed the rights guaranteed Lutherans, upon the plea of a general, but not of a specific agreement with it. The Confession thus lost its place as a doctrinal test among Lutherans. When the mark placed upon a house in "The Arabian Nights" was industriously copied upon all the houses in the neighborhood by enterprising boys, it ceased to be a distinguishing character. The signatures to the Confession of many who did not accept all its doctrines rendered every signature doubtful. It was for such reason that Arndt, in his dying testimony, most solemnly confessed "the true religion of the Formula of Concord," and Spener wrote an especial treatise in defence of the same Formula, and the Halle Faculty declared that they held with absolute firmness to all the Symbolical Books, and Muhlenberg challenged his accusers to find anything that he had said or written in conflict with them.

The General Council has simply placed itself unequivocally upon the foundation laid in the first Constitution of the Mother Synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania (ch. vi. § 2): "Every minister

professes that he holds to the word of God and our Symbolical Books." The revision in 1792, after Muhlenberg's death, erased this provision, thus involving later generations in untold difficulties and dangers from doctrinal indifferentism, until a return was made to the firmer and clearer basis of the Fathers of the Lutheran Church in this country.

Following these "Principles of Faith" are those of "Church Polity." They may be briefly outlined as follows:

The power of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Supreme Head of the Church, can be delegated to no man or body of men on earth. All the power which the Church can exercise is through the administration of the Word and sacraments, and is obligatory upon its members only according to the degree in which it is faithful to Holy Scripture. The congregations are the primary bodies through which this power is normally exercised. Congregations may act through representatives in Synods, and these Synods again in a General Body. The decisions of Synods command respect, chiefly because they are presumed to be guarded by constitutional provisions, which give greater probability of correctness than those of any single congregations or individuals. They are constantly subject to revision and appeal by the congregations. Synods can deal with each other only as Synods, and the official

record must be accepted as evidence of the doctrinal position. Synods are organized to maintain sound doctrine, settle controversies, regulate the externals of worship according to the New Testament, and in keeping with the liberty of the Church, and make provision for carrying on the Church's work in every department of beneficent labor.

In the "Constitution for Congregations," which claimed the attention of the General Council for a number of years, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism alone are expressly mentioned as the doctrinal standards of the congregation, while the pastor is obligated besides to the Apology, Large Catechism, Smalcald Articles and Formula of Concord. The Lay Eldership is omitted, the Deacons being, with the Pastor or Pastors, the only members of the Church Council. This provision, however, has not been universally adopted, the Lay Eldership introduced by Muhlenberg still maintaining a firm hold, especially in Pennsylvania. The Church Year and its festivals are recognized in the same document, as well as catechetical instruction, and a previous notice on the part of those desiring to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning Chiliasm, the General Council declared at Pittsburg, in 1868, that "it has neither had, nor would consent to have, fellowship with any Synod which tolerates the 'Jewish opinions' condemned in the XVII Article of the Augsburg Confession."

In the same declaration it warned against "all societies for moral and religious ends which do not rest upon the supreme authority of God's Word, or recognize our Lord Jesus Christ as true God, and the only Mediator," "or which assume to themselves what God has given to His Church and its ministers," or "require undefined obligations to be assumed by oath." In the Swedish Augustana Synod, members of secret societies are excluded from the communion of the Church; in the other Synods the testimony against them is more or less pronounced, although Church discipline against them is rigidly exercised only in a few places.

Concerning "Exchange of Pulpits," the same declaration forbids the admission to our pulpits of any man, "whether of the Lutheran name or of any other, of whom there is just reason to doubt whether he will preach the pure truth of God's Word as taught in the Confession of our Church." Concerning the preaching by Lutheran ministers in other pulpits, the Pittsburgh Declaration of 1868 was reaffirmed at Philadelphia in 1885, and was rediscussed at Pittsburgh in 1889. According to it:

"Lutheran ministers may properly preach wherever there is an opening in the pulpit of other churches, unless the circumstances imply, or seem to imply, a fellowship with error or schism, or a restriction on the unreserved expression of the whole counsel of God."

The Akron Declaration of 1872 was not intended as an ample exhibition of the entire subject of Pul-

pit and Altar Fellowship, but simply to state certain general principles which seemed to be self-evident, making no new rule, but simply stating what was generally understood to be the practice in all our Churches.

"I. The rule is: Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran ministers only. Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only.

"II. The exceptions to the rule belong to the sphere of privilege, not of right.

"III. The determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles by the conscientious judgment of pastors, as the cases arise."

This means that no one is to be admitted either to the pulpit or the altar, unless the Church, or its officers acting for it, are satisfied as to his fitness and preparation. The responsibility in both cases is so great that there should be no encouragement of the setting aside of the Church's provisions for guarding these two most holy places. No denial of either the Christian character or the ministerial standing of any one who would be excluded by the strict enforcement of such rule, is intended. It simply means that the Lutheran Church and no other communion is responsible for those who preach and commune in a Lutheran church. For a number of years it was a question of controversy in the General Council, whether the action at Galesburg in 1875, which declared the Rule Scriptural, abrogated or not the exceptions provided for at Akron. The General Council at Pittsburgh, in 1889, declared that the two declarations were ex-

planatory of each other, and, therefore, that the principle of exceptions to be made by pastors as circumstances arise, still stands. The exceptions, however, must be such as carry out the spirit of the Rule.

Closely connected with this is the definition made at Lancaster, O., in 1870, of "fundamental doctrines," in which the distinction is drawn between "doctrines which are fundamental to the existence of Christianity," and those "which are fundamental to the complete integrity of Christianity." The "fundamental errorists" to be excluded from the Lord's Table are declared to be "those who wilfully, wickedly and persistently desert, in whole or in part, the Christian faith."

There has been no controversy within the General Council on the subject of election, and, therefore, no official declaration by the Council on the subject that has so largely occupied the attention of a number of the Synods. An "Opinion" was, however, published in 1884 by the Philadelphia Faculty, declaring that the terms "*intuitu fidei*," "*ex praevisa fide*" do not present a satisfactory solution of the theological problem, but that the condemnation of the use of such terms, when explained with the limitations placed upon them by our Lutheran dogmaticians, is not justified by the Confession of our Church. It is the general teaching that faith holds the same relation to election

as to justification, and that, as we are justified, not on account of faith, so also we are elected not on account of faith; but that we are both elected and justified with respect to, or through the merits of Christ apprehended by faith, or with respect to or through faith apprehending the merits of Christ. Man can in no way prepare himself for divine grace, or even co-operate, by his own powers, with divine grace, when it approaches him. Faith itself is entirely the gift of God, brought to man and wrought in man, through the means of grace. Man's will is free to resist this grace at any stage. If man be saved, he is saved altogether by God's grace; if he be lost, he is lost altogether by his own sin and fault. That one accepts and another rejects divine grace, is not due to a difference made between the two by God's will. The universal grace of God is made particular by the obstinate resistance of those who repel the Holy Spirit. In those who accept divine grace, even the power to cease to resist is a special gift and endowment of the Spirit. What we call in time justification, is, with respect to the eternity that precedes time, election. God's foreknowledge of the justification of individual believers, is his election, with only this difference, that, as the will is impelled by no irresistible grace, its liability to fall continues to the end of this life, and hence justification may be only temporary; but with respect to those who remain in a justified state until

the end of this life, election and justification coincide. Election is thus the pretemporal record of the justification of those who die in Christ. The entire tendency among us is to follow Luther's latter course, viz., when troubled with thoughts concerning election to find the answer by a consideration of what is involved in justification. Mysteries enough still remain, into the reasons for which we make no attempt to inquire.

The Language Question has been a prominent feature in all the discussions and work of the Council. The German, the Swedish and the English have all a good representation at all its meetings, with an occasional addition of the Norwegian. The Germans have preponderated in numbers; the English have very largely shaped its legislation and led in its debates, while the Swedes have held the balance of power. At the urgent request of the Swedes, the English has been made the official language of the Council, any one who uses another language, except from clear necessity, being in danger of a call to order from the Swedish brethren. At Chicago, in 1869, the Council declared that "it is just as possible to hold the Lutheran faith and observe Lutheran usages in the English language as in the German;" that "the pastors and people of our German and Scandinavian churches should cheerfully and conscientiously promote the transfer into English Evangel-

ical Lutheran churches, of all those who do not understand the preaching of the Word of God in the language of their fathers," and where there is no English Lutheran church, "encouraging the necessary steps as soon as possible for the establishment of English Mission Sunday-schools and Churches."

Always ready to co-operate with other Lutheran Bodies, the General Council offers the right of representation and participation in its discussions to any Synod adopting the "Fundamental Principles," even although such Body ask no organic union with the Council. In all negotiations looking towards co-operation, those charged to represent her have been reminded of these principles as a basis of all they have been authorized to present or concede. No General Body or Synod or individual repudiating or attacking the Confessions of the Church, or that, while formally subscribing them, fails to maintain and teach the doctrines therein set forth, or that defends and apologizes for their assailants, can be regarded as within the sphere where co-operation is in any sense practical. This has been made prominent in all conferences and dealings, particularly with the General Synod, from the action at Fort Wayne in 1893 (Minutes, p. 89) to that at Buffalo in 1906 (Minutes, pp. 200 sqq.).

But every proposition that offers a reasonable hope of securing a clearer understanding between the separated Bodies, a non-interference with each others' work, or even of active and well-regulated co-operation, has met with a uniformly cordial response. In the movement for a Common Service, first published in 1888, and that for a Common Book of Worship, towards which the General Council has been laboring since 1895 (Minutes, p. 60), and which is now fast nearing completion (1914), in the conferences between the Boards of Deaconesses, joint understandings between the Publication Houses, and the co-operation between the Foreign Mission Boards and between their missionaries on the foreign field, as well as in efforts to prevent friction in the starting of new congregations, much has been accomplished.

The Liturgical activity of the General Council has been inherited from her oldest Synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. When the General Council was formed, the English Church-Book was almost finished. It had just been published at the second session of the Council in 1868. It was very generally introduced into the town and city and many of the country churches, with some variation, however, as to the amount of the service used.

Prejudice gradually vanished, and the Church-Book grew every year more and more deeply into the affections of the people, proving, wherever introduced, a powerful educator. The German *Kirchenbuch* followed. This, however, encountered more opposition, for several reasons: It was difficult to replace the familiar hymns of the Pennsylvania Synod's book by the more sober, but severely classical hymns of the new book. The opposition of Southern Germans to a full liturgical order was difficult to overcome. It has, however, been also working its way constantly towards a united use. When the "Common Order of Service" was prepared, the instructions which guided the Joint Committee being the same as those according to which the Church-Book had been compiled, led to essentially the same result.

The Service is prized especially for its clear confession of the doctrines of the Church in due proportion, in regular order, and with such admirable comprehensiveness as to present throughout the year the whole counsel of God. It is of itself a creed of the people, according to the rule of St. Augustine: *Lex supplicandi est lex credendi,* giving simplest and most popular expression to the doctrines more amply stated and defended in the formal and fuller Confessions. But it is far more than a creed. The plan of salvation is not minutely dissected, as has to be done in accurate dogmatic defi-

nitions, framed for the schools, but is presented in all its simplicity and concrete reality. All its various parts center around Christ, presenting Him in all His offices, in both His states, in the fulness of His work, and in all His relations to the sinful and sorrowing, the penitent and believing, the afflicted and tempted, the dying and the glorified. Its lessons and responses and collects and chants are intended simply to carry the devotions of the worshippers to the Throne of Grace, as far as possible, in the very words of Holy Scripture. Wherever introduced it is affectionately cherished by the congregations, who could scarcely be persuaded to become accustomed to the coldness and formality and incoherency, affording little food for the heart, that so often characterizes a Service without a fixed order.

Nevertheless, our churches most devoted to the Church-Book, are not so bound to the appointed lessons and prayers, as not, under peculiar and exceptional circumstances, to vary or depart from them, or even to entirely dispense with them. Where the prayers provided do not meet the circumstances of the worshippers, there is no difficulty in finding others that are suitable. Where the people are unable to use a full Lutheran Service to edification, no attempt is made to force it upon them. The general feeling is that the man is to be pitied who is so bound to a Liturgy as to be

unable to find any edification except in a prayer that is read; but that he is equally to be pitied who can find no edification in the fixed prayers upon which the yearnings of the hearts of millions of God's people have ascended to Heaven for many centuries.

In later years there has been a greater centralization of the practical work of the Council. As there was some apprehension on the part of the Swedish Augustana Synod, whose territory covers the whole country and which has a peculiar work to perform that cannot be transferred without injury to the cause it represents to any General Body, lest, in this centralizing process, the rights of Synods, guaranteed in the Fundamental Principles of Church Polity, might be compromised, the following action was taken at Lancaster in 1911 (Minutes, pp. 223 sq.):

"That the General Council calls attention to the fact that its fundamental principles of faith and church polity are by the very terms of the union of Synods with it absolutely unalterable. The General Council stands or falls according to its agreement with or its dissent from these principles. . . . That wherever any Synods transfer to the General Council the administration of any of their interests which they believe can be more efficiently administered by a policy of unification, the constitutional rights of all other Synods that do not deem it advisable to adopt the same policy shall be safeguarded and respected, and such Synods shall be regarded as no less loyal to the General Council. . . . That this General Council now, as at its foundation, will welcome to membership in its con-

ventions the representatives of all Synods of the Lutheran Church in America that profess with us the same principles of faith and church polity, and guarantee to them the preservation of their own identity and provisions of Synodical constitution as set forth in the constitution of this body and in their own Synodical constitutions as agreed upon at their admission."

The General Council is only at the beginning of its work. Much time has been spent in laying the foundation broadly and deeply, and in answering questions that must be understood before a basis of widely-extended, solid and harmonious work can be reached. Her embarrassments have arisen largely from the comprehensiveness of her aims. In the endeavor to further, as far as possible, union among all Lutherans in this country, elements have been brought together at her conventions that, except for the common faith, were largely strange to one another. The very circumstances which President Bassler noted at the first convention, as indicating a remarkable Providence, have brought corresponding difficulties. He said:

"That so many persons should come together—persons who have been educated in different institutions, under diverse influences—even in different countries, and using different languages—and yet should be able to see eye to eye, so far as to use the same words in declaring their apprehension of God's Word, *e. g.*, in the confession of their faith; and not only to use the same words, but to use these words in one and the same sense, is certainly the work of God's Holy Spirit."

But these advantages have been partially offset by the fact that it requires time to make such a body thoroughly homogeneous. Christian men must not only have the same faith, and subscribe to the same Confession, but must learn to know and understand one another by a long experience, to make due allowances for each others' faults, and to appreciate the graces of the Spirit that often abound in, and beyond, and above the sometimes more visible works of the flesh. If the entire Lutheran Church of America is ever to be united, it will pass through the very same experience. Activity and earnestness, within one organization, of those who have been previously separated, mean discussion, delay, and sometimes even considerable friction, before a thorough understanding is reached. John Damascenus, the great theologian of the Greek Church, has well said: σύνθεσις ἀρχὴ μάχης, i. e., "Union is the beginning of controversy." The question that is often to be decided is as to whether the understanding should be reached before or after union; i. e., Shall there ever be union without unity? The General Council had no choice to make. With a sincere desire to have all Lutherans in America not only dwelling together in peace, but also vigorously prosecuting the great work opening to our Church in this country, the efforts were made to promote this end, as Providence pointed the way. Never has her harmony been greater than at present; nor is this har-

mony at the expense of her fidelity, or due to inactivity and indifference. But her future, like that of the entire Lutheran Church, is in God's hands; and the lot of the entire Church may be read in the career through which she has passed and is passing.

The Synodical Conference

By REV. PROF. F. PIEPER

[*Preliminary Remark.* Since the "distinctive doctrines and usages of the Synodical Conference" are based upon clearly understood general truths and principles, the author of this treatise has deemed it appropriate to introduce the presentation of the several articles here discussed by a statement of the underlying principles.]

OF THE CHURCH.

What it is. The Church, in the proper sense of the term, is *the aggregate of all true believers in Christ. All* those, and *only* those who believe in Christ, are members of the Church. Whoever believes in Christ, is a member of the Church, whether he be in external fellowship with an orthodox, or in external union with a heterodox congregation, or in no external connection with any church at all. On the other hand, whoever does not believe in Christ, is not a member of the Church, although he be a person of good external standing

in an orthodox congregation, or even a minister or high dignitary in it. In short, *faith in Christ is the all-deciding factor in regard to church-membership.* The *wicked* and the *hypocrites*, although they have *external* fellowship with the Church, form no *part* of it. The Church is the *spiritual body* of Christ, the "congregation of *saints*," whose hearts, through faith in Christ, are ruled by the Holy Spirit, whilst all unbelievers, however holy in outward appearance, are in the power of Satan, and members of his kingdom (Eph. ii. 2).

In order to maintain the true conception of the Church, what is necessarily or commonly *connected* with it must not be confounded with the Church *itself.* For instance, *Christ* is the *head* of the Church, but not the Church *itself*, the Church being His spiritual *body* (Eph. i. 22, 23). Again, *The Word of God and the Sacraments* are necessarily connected with the Church, they being the *seed* (1 Pet. i. 23; Mark iv. 26, 27; Titus iii. 5, 6), and the *bread* (John vi. 51 compared with John viii. 31; vi. 68; 1 Cor. xii. 13), and, consequently, also the *true marks* of the Church, but they are not the Church *itself*, nor part of it. Finally, Christians dwelling together in the same place are *bound* to unite also in *external fellowship* for the purpose of preaching and hearing the Word of God, etc., and they *may* enter into a larger ecclesiastical organization with other Churches, but *no external ecclesiastical organization of any kind* is the Church

itself, or part of it, the Church being "properly *nothing else* than the congregation of all believers and saints" (Augsb. Conf., Art. VIII). The Church is not a mere sum of *ordinances*, institutions, ceremonies, etc., but the great spiritual body of *men* believing in Christ.

Importance of this doctrine. It is of great importance to retain this true definition of the Church, because it may easily be shown that all errors concerning this article of the Christian faith spring from forgetting the simple truth that the Church properly *is* "*nothing* else than the congregation of believers." Moreover, by retaining this truth, we shall not content ourselves with belonging merely to the external communion of the Church, but we shall rather earnestly take heed that we belong to the internal communion of saints, and remain therein unto our end, and thus in eternity. Finally, by keeping in view that the Church is the congregation of *believers*, we shall not, for the purpose of building and extending the Church, resort to wrong means, such as temporal power, external force, human ordinances, church-fairs, church-fellowship with errorists; for by such means *faith in Christ* is neither wrought nor preserved, but, on the contrary, hindered or destroyed. Keeping in mind that the Church is the congregation of believers, we shall rather faithfully and diligently use the means ordained of God, which alone produce and preserve faith in Christ in the

hearts of men, to wit, the preaching of the pure Gospel and the right administration of the Sacraments. The stress laid on the "*pure* doctrine" or "*pure* Gospel" must not be ridiculed, since the Gospel generates and preserves faith only so far as it is pure.

The Church without which there is no salvation. Of the Church which "is the great body of true believers in all parts of the world, from the rising of the sun to his setting," the proposition is true, that *there is no salvation without the Church* (extra ecclesiam nulla salus), the proposition being equivalent to what our Lord says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life" (John iii. 36).

The Church not confined within the particular orthodox Churches or congregations. The Church without which there is no salvation, is not confined within the boundaries of the orthodox Churches, that is, of those particular Churches in which *all* the articles of the Christian faith are taught in their purity; but it is found throughout the world in those ecclesiastical communities also in which, beside errors, so much of the saving truth is taught that true faith in Christ may be produced. The so-called "Missourians," although emphasizing the distinction between orthodox and heterodox Churches, have always rejected the doctrine that the orthodox Lutheran Church is *the* Church, i. e., the Church without which there is no salvation.

This doctrine they hold to be an un-Lutheran, yea, an impious doctrine, as it overthrows the main article of the Christian religion, the article that man is justified and saved by faith in Christ, notwithstanding man's shortcomings in knowledge and life.

The Church is, and always remains, in this life invisible.

As the Church is nothing else than the congregation of believers, and God only, the searcher of hearts, knows those who truly believe, it is, and always remains, in this life *invisible.* (Luke xvii. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 19.) The Church, in the proper sense of the term, is not in part only invisible, in part, however, visible, the audible and visible means of grace constituting its "visible side." What is necessarily *connected* with the Church, is not to be confounded with the *Church itself.* Although wherever the Word of God is found, we are to find the Church, yet the Word of God forms no part of the Church, the component parts of the Church being only the *believers.* This may be illustrated by an example. Man cannot live without air and his daily bread. But the air and the daily bread do not form an essential part of *man.* So the Church lives by the Word of God, but the Word of God is not an essential part of the Church. The Church itself, therefore, can not be called visible on account of the audible and visible means of grace.

Universal Church and particular Churches.

The Scriptures not only speak of the *one* Church (Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. i, 22. 23), but frequently mention *Churches* in the plural, *e. g.*, the Churches of *Asia*, 1 Cor. xvi. 19; the Churches of *Macedonia*, 2 Cor. viii. 1; the Church of God which is at *Corinth*, 1 Cor. i. 2; the Church which was *at Jerusalem*, Acts viii. 1; "tell it unto *the Church*," Matt. xviii. 17. It is, therefore, in accordance with Scripture that we speak of *local* or *particular* Churches. But the relation existing between the particular churches and the una sancta (universal Church) ought to be rightly understood. Men cannot, like God, look into the hearts, nor should they try to do so. We, therefore, have to consider all such to belong to the particular Church as unite with us in the profession of faith and do not contradict this profession by an ungodly life. It is in this regard that the particular Churches are called *visible* Churches. But we do not on this account set up *two* Churches. For the *visible* particular Church *is* a *Church*, and is *called* a Church and has the privileges of a Church ("the power of the keys") only *on account of the true believers that are within it.* The *particular* (*i. e.*, *local*) Churches, therefore, properly speaking, *consist* of true believers only, the hypocrites being *intermingled* with the Church through *external* fellowship solely, forming no part of the particular Church itself. This is evident from all those passages of Scripture in

which the *particular* Churches are described as the "Churches of God," consisting of those "*that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" (1 Cor. i. 2; Rom. i. 7). Hence it is, that a description of an Evangelical Lutheran local Church ("Ortsgemeinde") is given in the following words by Dr. Walther: "An Evangelical Lutheran local Church is an assembly of believing Christians in a certain place with whom the Word of God is preached in its purity, and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel." The relation between the particular Churches and the one universal Church may, therefore, be stated thus: the aggregate of the particular Churches (with the addition of those single believers who are cut off from all external Church-fellowship) is the one universal Church, embracing all true believers in all parts of the world.

ORTHODOX AND HETERODOX CHURCHES.

The particular Churches are of *two kinds*, determined by their relation to the Word of God. It is Christ's order and precept that the pure doctrine, and nothing but the pure doctrine, should be preached and heard in His Church. Throughout the whole Scriptures there is not found a single passage which authorizes or permits a minister to teach false doctrine, or a Christian to unite with those who teach false doctrine. Hence arises the difference between orthodox and hetero-

dox Churches! A Church which conforms to the command of Christ, that is, a Church in which the Gospel is taught in its purity and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel, is by right called an orthodox Church; on the other hand, a Church which does not conform to the will of Christ, but allows false doctrine to be taught in its midst, is justly called a heterodox Church. As ours is an age of indifference to doctrine, Christians must take special heed that the difference between orthodox and heterodox Churches be not obliterated. And it should be distinctly understood that the character of the Churches as to their orthodoxy, is determined by the doctrine which is *actually taught*, not by the "officially acknowledged confession" kept perhaps in the archives only; for Christ commanded all the articles of the Christian faith to be taught, and not kept on record only.

The heterodox Churches are called both "Churches" and "sects" in diverse respects. They are called *Churches* in so far as, besides erroneous doctrines, essential parts of the saving truth are retained, and, consequently, true children of God may be born and are found among them; they are called *sects* in so far as they profess doctrines contrary to the Scriptures, and, by adhering to false doctrine, have caused division in the Church, and constantly imperil the faith and salvation of the children of God.

What position Christians ought to maintain toward the existing heterodox Churches.

As no person is licensed to speak aught but the Word of God in the Church (1 Pet. iv. 11), and no Christian is allowed to unite with a teacher who in any way deviates from the doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture, Christians who are not yet connected with heterodox Churches, should *avoid* them, and Christians already united with them, should *come out* from among them. It is not according to the *good pleasure* of God—as modern theologians teach—that sects exist, for all Christians are required to agree on all articles of faith revealed in Holy Scripture (1 Cor. i. 10; Eph. iv. 3–6), but sects arose and exist by God's *forbearance* only, like other sins. Sects arise and continue, not for the purpose that Christians should *join* them, but for the purpose that Christians should prove their allegiance to God by *avoiding* them, as the Scriptures explicitly teach, 1 Cor. xi. 19: "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

To unite with heterodox Churches, must not be *excused* by pointing to the fact that many dear children of God are found among them. As it was not lawful for the Israelites to join with Absalom, although two hundred men out of Jerusalem went with the rebel "in their simplicity" (2 Sam. xv. 11), even so it is not lawful for Christians to unite with those ecclesiastical communities that rebel

against Christ by proclaiming false doctrines, although many Christians "in their simplicity" and by mistake have joined them.

Here the question may be answered what position a Christian should hold in regard to the so-called FOUR POINTS.

Chiliasm. By chiliasm we understand the doctrine according to which a glorified state of the Church on earth in a millennial reign is to be expected. It is a *false* doctrine, as it contradicts several clearly revealed truths, especially the truth that the Church on earth is to be a kingdom subject to the cross even unto the end of the world. (Acts xiv. 22; Luke xviii. 8.) It is, besides, a very *dangerous* doctrine, as it perverts the hope of the Christains, inviting them to hope for a glorification in this world, instead of in the world to come. Consequently, chiliasm must not be treated as an "open question," but every Christian, every congregation, and every ecclesiastical body, are bound to *reject* the chiliastic opinion.

Pulpit-fellowship. All Christians are commanded to *avoid* those who teach doctrines contrary to the Scriptures (Rom. xvi. 17); teachers, therefore, who in any way proclaim false doctrines, are not to be *admitted* into, but to be *excluded* from our pulpits. As this rule is taken from the Word of God, it admits of no exception, but applies to every case and occasion. The practice of pulpit-fellowship with errorists cannot be excused on the plea of its being

demanded by *love*. For it is contrary to both the love toward *God* who bids us "*avoid*" false teachers and not to *invite* them into our pulpits, and the love toward our fellow-men, as it is our Christian duty to warn them against error, and not to confirm them in it. Moreover, it is patent that by the practice of "exchanging pulpits" the dissensions in the Church, caused by false teachers, are not removed, but continued and ratified.

Altar-fellowship. In regard to altar-fellowship the same reasons hold good which forbid Church-fellowship with errorists. Altar-fellowship certainly is Church-fellowship. There is, however, an additional reason to be noted on this point. According to the explicit statement of Holy Scripture all such as are not able to "discern the Lord's body," partake unworthily of the Lord's Supper. Consequently, love bars us from admitting to our altars Christians who do not believe the real and substantial presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, and, therefore, are not able to discern the body of the Lord. This rule too, being taken from the Word of God, admits of no exceptions. To say that making exceptions should be left to the discretion of the individual pastor or congregation, is, in fact, granting a license to act against the Word of God. Suspension of altar-fellowship is not to be called excommunication. The Lutheran Church denied altar-and pulpit-fellowship to the Reformed, with-

out denying that there are Christians among the Reformed.

Secret societies. Secret societies, such as Odd Fellows, Free Masons, etc., are incompatible with the Christian Church. For in these societies a way is commended *of obtaining* "*eternal happiness*," not through Christ, however, and Him crucified, but by "moral education." There is *praying* also in the Lodges, but not in the name of Jesus Christ. From this it appears—not to mention the ungodly oaths and other objectionable features connected with membership in the Lodges—that a Christian can not enter into membership with secret societies without professing a false way to heaven and participating in a false worship, and thus denying Christ, man's only hope for salvation. It is the sacred duty of the Christian Church to raise her voice against secret societies, for a public testimony; and especially for the purpose of regaining such of her members as are already led astray by the Lodges.

OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

The ministerial office, that is, the office of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, is not of human ordinance, but of *divine* institution.

As it is God who instituted the ministerial office, so it is *He* who calls certain persons to this office, Acts xx. 28; Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12; Matt. ix. 38. Thus far all parties agree.

But *through* whom, i. e., what human agency, does God effect his call? Here, disagreement begins. The right answer is: The right and power of electing and calling ministers of the divine Word is *primarily and immediately* granted, not to the pope, nor to bishops, nor to the ministry, nor to a Consistory, nor to the Presbytery, nor to a civil power of any form, but to those to whom *all* spiritual power ("Church-power") originally and immediately belongs, namely, the *congregation of believers.* As it is the congregation of believers that has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. xvi, 19, xviii. 18), that is primarily commissioned to teach all nations and to administer the Sacraments, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), that is the "royal priesthood" for showing forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, so it is, in the very nature of the case, the congregation of believers that is entrusted with the power of appointing ministers. Hence, the Lutheran Church confesses in the Smalcald Articles: "Where there is a true Church, there must be the right to elect and ordain ministers." No human authority can remove this right from the congregation of believers, as it was granted to them by Christ when they became children of God through faith in Christ, and is, consequently, inhering in their being Christians. The congregation of believers may, of course, transfer the *exercise* of this right to one or more persons. Ministers called by individual persons or

a body of persons in the name of the congregation of believers have received a valid and divine call. But it ever remains true and must never be forgotten, that the only body to whom the right and power of calling ministers is *originally* entrusted, is the congregation of believers. Whoever is called to the ministerial office by this body either directly or indirectly, has received a *divine* call; whoever derives from other sources the authority to teach publicly, is to be classed with those of whom the Lord says: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran" (Jer. xxiii. 21). All this may be summed up thus: the ministerial office is conferred by God upon certain persons through the divinely prescribed call of the congregation, the congregation being, by the gift of Christ, the original possessor of all Church-power. The ministers have their office from Christ, not immediately, however, but mediately, by the Church, in virtue of delegation through the call. According to Holy Scripture the members of the Christian Church among themselves constitute a spiritual *republic* (Matt. xxiii. 8). As the office of a Governor or President in a republic is not a personal prerogative of an individual person or order of persons, but the common property of the whole free and sovereign nation, which delegates its right to the office through election to a certain person: even so the ministerial office and all spiritual rights are the common property of the free and sovereign people of believers

(Matt. xxiii. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 9,) who delegate the divinely instituted office of the ministry through the divinely prescribed call to certain suitable persons. The ministers are not only servants of *Christ* (1 Cor. iv. 1), but also servants of the *Church* (2 Cor. iv. 5), performing the functions of the office in the place and name of the Church, and being accountable for the faithful discharge of their duties not only to Christ, but also to the congregation (1 Colossians iv. 17.)

The proper answer to the question whether it is the *universal* or the *local* Church that is entrusted with the right of calling ministers, is that Christ clearly ascribes "the keys of the kingdom," and, consequently, the right to appoint ministers, to the *local* Church. For it is the local Church which Christ addresses when He says: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 18, 20.

Ordination. It is the *call* of the congregation that constitutes ministers, and actually confers the ministerial office. *Ordination* is not a *divine* ordinance, but an *apostolic-ecclesiastical institution.* It does not confer the ministry, as Papists and Romanizing Protestants assert, but is only a public testimony and confirmation of the call. Ordination, therefore, is not essential to the validity of the ministerial office.

The right of judging on questions of doctrine does not rest with the Church at large only, nor with Synods only representing the Church of a certain country, nor with the clergy alone, but *with all individual Christians*, since upon all Christians is laid the duty of distinguishing pure teachers from deceivers, and of departing from error, Matt. vii. 15; Rom. xvi. 17. To take away from Christians the right of judging on questions of doctrine, is an abominable outrage, and the origin of popery.

Obedience is due to the ministerial office, whenever it sets forth the Word of God. Beyond these limits obedience must neither be *demanded* nor *rendered*. A minister who demands obedience of Christians in things not commanded or forbidden by the Word of God, puts himself in the place of Christ, for it is Christ's privilege to be the Master of those who believe in Him (Matt. xxiii. 8). A Christian who allows men to bind his conscience beyond the Word of God, by this very fact and in this regard falls away from Christ as his only Master, and becomes an idolator, paying divine honors to mortal man. It is a misuse of the Fourth Commandment when ministers in demanding obedience in things not commanded by God refer to that Commandment. What is true concerning ministers, holds good also in regard to the so-called representative Church, namely, in regard to Synods, Church Councils, etc. If the decisions and injunctions of the "Church" are identical with the

Word of God, they are to be obeyed, not because they are the decisions of the *Church*, but on account of their being the very Word of God. If they go beyond these limits, either by declaring to be true what the Scriptures pronounce to be false, or by making obligatory upon the consciences of Christians what is a matter of indifference, all Christians are bound to disregard them. There is absolutely no authority in the Church beyond the Word of God, and there is, consequently, no authority on earth that could make the least thing, not prescribed by Christ, obligatory upon a Christian's conscience. The pope, says Luther, has the power of laying a fast upon *himself*, but not on some second person in the whole world. This holds true concerning all matters of indifference and with all persons.

But as there are, within the individual congregations, many things to be determined upon which Christ did not prescribe, how then are these things to be arranged? Not by the clergy alone commanding the Christian people what to do, nor by the majority prescribing conscience-binding laws to the minority, nor by some authority outside of the congregation deciding for the congregation what was left undecided by Christ, but by the deliberations and the mutual agreement of the whole congregation, the minority submitting to the majority, or the majority to the minority, "for the sake of charity and tranquillity," as the case

and occasion may require. Matters of indifference are easily arranged if the Christians do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. When they walk after the flesh, they will try to lord over their brethren; when they walk after the Spirit, they are always ready to submit to them for charity's sake.

Synods must not claim divine authority over the congregations connected with them, but carefully keep within the sphere of *advisory* bodies. The local congregation is the highest divinely instituted tribunal in the Church, as is seen from Matt. xviii. 17. All jurisdiction exercised over congregations by persons outside of the congregations is of *human* ordinance only.

OF CHURCH-UNION.

All *Christians* are already *one* in Christ. Christ's promise that "there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 16), has been in the course of fulfillment ever since the times of the apostles, whenever a soul by true conversion was added to the communion of believers. All Christians actually agree on the main article of Christian religion, namely, on the article that they have forgiveness of their sins through faith in Christ alone, and not by their own works, although many of them are in external connection with heterodox churches, and, by infirmity, err in some parts of doctrine. For it is this faith that makes a man a

Christian and unites him with the spiritual body of Christ.

Nevertheless, it is a deplorable state of things, that there are external Christian communities differing in doctrine. Sects, as stated before, do not exist according to God's will and good pleasure, but only by God's forbearance. All Christians, therefore, should be desirous of a reunion, and earnestly labor for the same.

But the union sought for must not be a so-called organic union only, but a union in faith and doctrine. Christians may differ and, in many cases, owing to different circumstances, must differ as to ceremonies, external organization, etc. But there is one thing concerning which all Christians of all times and of all countries should perfectly agree—they should be one in *faith and doctrine.* "I beseech you, brethren," St. Paul says, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10).

How is this union to be effected? Sects arose when certain persons taught contrary to the Scriptures, and others, instead of rebuking their errors, united with them. The only way, therefore, to cause the divisions to disappear, is to remind the Christians of their duty to part with error, and, consequently, with all persons that persist in pro-

claiming doctrines contrary to Holy Scripture, and to unite with those that teach the pure word of God. Christians should never agree to disagree on any article of faith, but earnestly endeavor to bring about an agreement on all doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture. Nothing but the revealed truth, and the *whole* revealed truth—that is the platform which God has made for the Christian, and which every Christian is commanded to stand upon. An agreement on a more or less comprehensive collection of so-called "fundamental articles," selected by man, leaving a portion of the divinely revealed truth to the discretion of the dissenting parties, is a position wholly unbecoming to Christians, for, not to deny, but to confess the Word of Christ, is their duty in this world.

But is perfect agreement concerning doctrine *possible?* We most emphatically answer: it is, as the Scriptures are perfectly clear on all articles of faith, every article of faith being revealed at least somewhere in the Scriptures in plain and proper words. God, by graciously giving his Word to men, did not propose to them a collection of riddles, but made his word to be "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path" (Ps. cxix. 105), "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter i. 19), "making wise the simple" (Ps. xix. 7). Erring concerning any article of faith is impossible as long as the words of Scripture are retained as they read. Ere falling into error is possible, the

plain words of Scripture must have either been entirely set aside or twisted from their natural meaning according to human reason or feelings.

ON "OPEN QUESTIONS."

There are, indeed, "open questions" if this term is used in the sense of "theological problems." Such are all those questions which are not decided in Holy Scripture. Open questions in this sense are never to be "closed," since no human authority, be it called "Church" or otherwise, can supply the lacking decision of Holy Scripture. This would be "adding unto the Word of God" and denying that the written Word of God is the only rule and standard of faith and life. Theologians should not waste their time and energy in trying to solve questions not answered by the Bible. On the other hand, all doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture are to be accepted and believed, for the very reason that they are propounded in Holy Scripture, no matter whether "decided" in the Symbolical Books and agreed upon by the theologians or not. To declare doctrines revealed in the Bible to be "open" or "free" for the reason that they are not yet "symbolically fixed" in the Confessions of the orthodox Church, or not yet accepted by all orthodox theologians, would, in fact, be the same as to put the Church, her Confessions and theologians, in the place of Holy Scripture, and to ascribe to the Church and her

theologians the authority of establishing articles of faith. We, of course, insist upon accepting the Confessions of the Lutheran Church without exception and reserve, as we are convinced that *all* doctrines propounded by them (either "ex professo" or incidentally) are in strict accordance with Holy Scripture, and we, moreover, maintain that a qualified acceptance of the Confessions of the Lutheran Church makes a qualified Lutheran. But we, nevertheless, denounce any position as un-Lutheran according to which the Confessions are to take the place of the Scriptures.

ON SUNDAY.

Sunday in the New Testament is not instituted by *God*, as was the Sabbath in the Old Testament; yea, Sabbath, or any other day, as a divine institution, is clearly abolished in the New Testament, as St. Paul declares: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Colossians ii. 16). Hence we are not bound by any law of *God* to observe either Sunday or any other day. Sunday belongs to the *Church* ordinances, and is to be classed with Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and other Christian holy days. The Christian Church has, in the free use of her liberty, chosen Sunday for a day of divine worship, because some time or other must be selected for hearing the public preaching of the Word of God.

We do not oppose *Sunday laws* enacted on merely *social* reasons; for public welfare demands a day of rest from daily labor "that both man and beast might be refreshed, and not exhausted by constant labor." But every Christian is in conscience bound to oppose all Sunday laws based on the assumption that Sunday is of *divine* ordinance, for by lending support to this assumption, we would participate of *false* doctrine and entangle Christians again with the yoke of bondage wherefrom Christ hath made them free. In the Augsburg Confession the "Sunday question" is summed up thus: "Those who are of opinion, that the ordinance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath was established as a thing necessary, err very much. For the Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath, and teaches, that all ceremonies of the old law, since the revelation of the Gospel, may be discontinued. And yet as it was necessary to appoint a certain day, so that the people might know when they should assemble, the Christian Church ordained Sunday for that purpose, and possessed rather more inclination and willingness for this alteration, in order that the people might have an example of *Christian liberty*, that they might know that neither the observance of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is necessary." The "Sunday question" is not an "open" one, but clearly decided by the Word of God.

ANTICHRIST.

Holy Scripture speaks of "*many* antichrists" (1 John ii. 18). As Christ alone is to rule in his Church by his Word, all false teachers setting forth in the Church their own doctrine instead of Christ's set themselves against Christ, attempt to cast off the authority of Christ and to overthrow his kingdom. Hence all false teachers are justly called antichrists. But the Scriptures speak also of *one* Antichrist in whom the principles and spirit of the many antichrists are to culminate. This Antichrist, commonly called the *great* Antichrist and graphically described in the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, we believe to be the pope at Rome, the papacy.

To this doctrine, so clearly stated in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church and once generally accepted by all Lutherans, exception is taken now. Modern Lutheran theologians, although acknowledging antichristian traits in the papacy, are waiting for a still greater foe of the Christian Church. But it is from ignorance or from a lack of due consideration as to what the Christian Church really is, when the pope at Rome is not recognized as the greatest possible human foe of the Christian Church, and when worldly potentates like Napoleon, or even Boulanger, are thought of as the Antichrist. The Christian Church is the communion of believers, that is, of those who believe that they are justified and saved by confiding in Christ's

merit alone and not in any merits of their own. It is this faith that constitutes the very essence of the spiritual life of a Christian. What the water is for the fish and the air for bodily life, that is reliance on God's grace in Christ alone for the spiritual life of the Christian. As soon as this faith is enkindled in their hearts they become Christians, as long as this faith continues in them they remain Christians, and the very moment this faith is extinguished in them, they cease to be Christians. Who, therefore, is the greatest enemy of the Christians or the Christian Church? He who uses every means to destroy in the hearts of Christians the faith that relies on Christ's merit alone. But this is what Rome is engaged in. Rome not only rejects the doctrine of justification through faith in Christ alone, but she, in the Resolutions of the Council of Trent, *curses* this truth by which Christians live. And she not merely curses it, but the whole system and machinery of Romanism has the tendency to hinder and destroy faith in Christ and to engender trust in man's own works. It was, indeed, a fearful thing when men like Nero slaughtered thousands of Christians. But it was a small affair when compared with what Rome does. For Rome incessantly takes the spiritual life of millions of Christians by taking from them faith in Christ as the only Mediator between God and man, not to mention here that Rome also drank the blood of the martyrs of Jesus whenever she had the power to do so.

Again, Christians are to be ruled by Christ's word alone (John viii. 31), Christ claiming the prerogative to be their only Master (Matt. xxiii. 8). But the Pope at Rome, under the pretense of being Christ's vicar on earth, alters and annuls Christ's Word and Commandments at his pleasure, bearing himself as if he were a God on earth.

And this dreadful and blasphemous work Rome does under the disguise of exquisite holiness. The infidels, of course, blaspheme Christ too, but they do it openly, and all Christians know that they have to beware of them. Rome, however, rejects and blasphemes Christ under the outward appearance of Christianity, and under the claim of being the Church without which there is no salvation, sustaining this false claim by all manner of deceits, by signs, and by lying wonders. Thus the papacy is the greatest possible foe of Christ and His Church, and all the traits which in 2 Thess. ii. are ascribed to the Antichrist, that he is to arise in the Church, exalting himself above all human authority, assuming to himself the prerogative of God, and sustaining these assumptions "with all power and signs and lying wonders"—all these traits we find in the pope at Rome. Hence, we fully and heartily indorse the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions, that the pope is the great Antichrist of whom Scripture has prophesied. In the papacy we see the great Antichrist standing barely and squarely in the sight of the Christians

and doing his fearful work, and, therefore, we are not looking forward to any other great Antichrist to come in future times.

We do not, of course, hold, as we are frequently represented, that this doctrine of the Antichrist is a fundamental article of the Christian religion. For man is saved by knowing Christ, not by knowing and recognizing Antichrist. But what we hold is this: every Christian, knowing Christ well, will recognize the papacy to be the very Antichrist, as soon as he becomes thoroughly acquainted with the teachings and doings of Rome. Especially we hold those *theologians* to be rather poor theologians who, knowing the doctrine and practice of the papacy, fail to recognize it to be the true Antichrist.

ON ABSOLUTION.

Absolution is nothing else than the *Gospel* directed to one or more individual persons who desire it. By the word of absolution the forgiveness of sin is really *offered* to all who hear it, and actually *conferred* on all who receive it in faith.

It is for a two-fold reason that to many Christians the practice of absolution is a matter of great offense. In the first place, they confound the divinely instituted absolution (John xx. 23; Matt. xviii. 18; xvi. 19) with the Romish caricature of such institution. According to the Romanists, absolution is an act which only the Roman priest

can perform, and by which the priest sits in judgment on the sinner, pardoning and condemning at his discretion. This doctrine, indeed, is as blasphemous as it is ridiculous, but it has nothing in common with the biblical doctrine held by the Lutheran Church. According to Holy Scripture, absolution is not a power vested in the ministry or any certain order of persons, but a power granted to the whole Church, i. e., to all believers. This is clearly seen by comparing John xx. 23, Matt. xvi. 19, with Matt. xviii. 18. In fact, all Christians when they console one another with the Gospel, they actually absolve. A child pronouncing the words of the Gospel remits sin just as effectually as a bishop, minister, etc.

But the main reason why so many Christians take offense at the practice of absolution is to be found in their inadequate ideas as to what the Gospel of Christ properly is. Their conceptions of the *vicarious work of Christ*, and consequently of the *Gospel* also, fail to come up to the biblical standard. They think that Christ has only brought about so much for us that *we* now, by our conversion, faith, and prayers, render God fully propitious, and thus obtain forgiveness of sins. Hence, they conceive the Gospel to be the declaration of certain *conditions* on which God would forgive sin. With many Christians and teachers the Gospel is a mere *plan* to save sinners, Christ having caused in the heart of God a certain *tendency* to forgive sin,

men *completing* the change in the heart of God by their being sorry for their sins, by their praying to God for forgiveness, by their earnest endeavors to lead a better life, etc. But these conceptions both of the work of Christ and the Gospel are altogether wrong. Christ has already perfectly and completely reconciled the whole world unto God, and the Gospel, being the message of what Christ has done for mankind, is "the Word of reconciliation," viz.: the word stating that God *is* reconciled—*perfectly* and *completely* reconciled—through Christ to the whole world and every individual sinner. The Gospel is not the Word which teaches how *men* might by their own exertions render God fully propitious, but the Word which assures us that God *was* reconciled to all men through the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, to preach the Gospel does not mean to lay before men a mere *plan* of salvation, or to declare the *conditions* of forgiveness, but preaching the Gospel is preaching pardon itself, salvation itself, "remission of sins" itself (Luke xxiv. 47). The Gospel is "nothing else than a great letter of pardon directed to the whole world." Hence it is that Luther frequently says: "A minister preaching the Gospel can not open his mouth without constantly remitting sin." Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, there absolution is pronounced. *It is from this conception of the Gospel that the Lutheran practice of absolution is to be judged and understood.* It should be borne

in mind also that God has already *absolved* the whole world in laying the sins of the whole world on Christ and in raising up Christ from the dead. With *our* sins upon him Christ entered into the prison-house of death; absolved from *our* sins he was set free in his resurrection. Hence it is seen that the resurrection of Christ actually involves an absolution of the whole world, and the absolution we pronounce is nothing but a repetition or echo of what God has long since pronounced.

But what of the necessity of *faith?* Faith, indeed, is necessary on the part of man; not, however, to render God fully propitious, or in any way to merit forgiveness of sin, but to *accept* of the forgiveness already earned by Christ and now offered in the Gospel. "Absolution"—says Dr. Walther —"demands faith, and faith alone receives what is offered and given by it; neither absolution, nor any means of grace, operates ex opere operato."

It is of great importance to maintain this true conception of the Gospel, viz., that forgiveness of sins exists for every sinner before his conversion and faith. For, how could man obtain forgiveness of sin *by faith*, *i. e.*, by *laying hold on it* by faith, if this forgiveness did not actually exist for him in Christ and were not offered to him in the Gospel?

To this doctrine is objected: "The forgiveness of sin is the prerogative of God." This is true! Whoever is not absolved by *God*, remains under the burden of sin, although he be a thousand times

absolved by men. But now the question arises whether God absolves *immediately*, *e. g.*, by visible apparition, or *mediately*, by using certain means. We most emphatically deny the former and affirm the latter. God performs his absolution *through the Word of reconciliation.* And this Word of reconciliation he has not kept for himself, but committed *to his Church* on earth. St. Paul after having stated "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," immediately adds: "and hath committed unto *us* the word of reconciliation." This, therefore, is the state of things: Christ having committed to His Church the *Gospel*, thereby committed to her the right and enjoined upon her the duty of forgiving sin. No one who concedes the former can consistently deny the latter. Hence, Christ in describing the agency by which sin is forgiven (John xx., Matt. xviii., Matt. xvi.), names the congregation of believers: "Whatsoever *ye* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," and "Whosesoever sins *ye* remit, they are remitted unto them." What is true of the preaching of the Gospel, is true also of the administration of the Sacraments, the Sacraments being nothing but the "*visible* Gospel." The person administering the Sacraments is, in fact, administering absolution. The person saying "I baptize you," at the same time says "I absolve you." Baptism is a private absolution. So is also the Lord's Supper.

Against absolution, moreover, is objected: "It is impossible to believe that God has given men the power of forgiving sin, unless he has given them the power of infallible judgment." This objection rests on the false supposition that absolution is a decision rendered on the state of man's heart, while it is a declaration given on the state of *God's* heart, namely, that God *is* reconciled to every sinner through Christ. God being perfectly reconciled to every sinner through Christ, as Holy Scripture reveals, no infallibility whatever is required on the part of man to pronounce absolution, but only a mouth to give utterance of a fact clearly revealed in Holy Scripture. Absolution is founded on two facts, first, that God is perfectly reconciled through Christ to every sinner; secondly, that God has commanded this Gospel to be preached in the world, and especially to the penitent sinners who long for the consolation of the Gospel. Absolution *demands* faith on the part of man, yet it is not *based* upon faith, but pronounced for the purpose of being *appropriated* by faith.

From the Lutheran Confessions the following statement concerning absolution may be cited here: The power of the keys announces to us the *Gospel*, through absolution; for absolution proclaims peace to the soul, and is *the Gospel itself* . . . When we hear absolution, that is, *the promise of divine grace*, or the *Gospel*, our hearts and consciences are consoled. Inasmuch as God truly grants new

life and comfort to our hearts *through the Word*, our sins are truly remitted here on earth through the power of the keys, so that we are released from them before God in heaven; as we find, Luke x. 16: "He that heareth you, heareth me." We should, therefore, esteem and believe the words of absolution no less than the clear voice of God from heaven. (Apology, N. M. ed. p. 236.)

OF JUSTIFICATION.

By justification we understand the remission of sins. Since Christ has already perfectly *acquired* forgiveness of sins for all men, and since this forgiveness is offered and exhibited to men through the means of grace, to wit, the Gospel and the Sacraments: the *only* means on our part of obtaining forgiveness of sins and salvation is that *faith* which accepts of the promise of God. All works and worthiness of our own are entirely excluded as a means of obtaining remission of sins or justification.

This is the *main* article of the Christian religion. It is by this article that the Christian religion is *distinguished* from all other so-called religions. There are *only two* essentially different religions in the world. According to one, justification and salvation is obtained, either totally or partially, by man's own works; according to the other, justification and salvation is obtained without works by faith, that is, by merely accepting of the grace of

God in Christ, exhibited in the Gospel. The latter is the Christian religion, the former the heathen religion in its various forms.

From this it appears that by corrupting the article of justification the essential feature of the Christian religion is destroyed. This is done e. g. by *synergism.* The assertion, that conversion and salvation depends not only upon the grace of God but to some extent also on the conduct of man, overthrows the article of justification, destroys the essential character of the Christian religion, and places it on equal footing with the heathen religions.

OF CONVERSION.

As natural man is *dead* in sin (Eph. ii. 1), yea *enmity* against God (Rom. viii. 7), his coming to God or his conversion is solely the work of God who through the means of his Word produces a new spiritual life and creates a new willing heart. The Scriptures explicitly declare that man's conversion is accomplished by the same *infinite* power by which God created natural light out of darkness (2 Cor. iv. 6), and raised Christ from the dead (Eph. i. 19, 20).

Hence there is no *co-operation* whatever on the part of man towards his conversion, but man is only the *object* that is to be converted. There are not *three*, but only *two* causes of conversion: The Holy Spirit and the Word of God; by adding a *third* cause, to wit, the will of man, or by asserting

that conversion depends not only on divine grace, but to some extent also on man's conduct, synergistic error is taught.

The converting or regenerating grace, however, is not *irresistible.* Man can offer *resistance* to God's earnest, regenerating grace, and thus *prevent* conversion, as Holy Scripture clearly teaches (Acts vii. 51; Matt. xxiii. 37). But man can not *promote* his conversion. He is not able to refrain from resisting the grace; non-resistance must be effected by the Holy Spirit. From man's ability to "behave evil" towards the Gospel (Matt. xxiii. 37) his ability to refrain from resistance, or to "behave well" toward converting grace must not be inferred (1 Cor. ii. 14). Hence it is rightly said *non-conversion* depends upon man's *evil conduct*, but it is not in accordance with the Scriptures to say that *conversion* also depends on man's *good conduct.* Hodge (Systematic Theology ii. 649) entirely misstates the Lutheran doctrine when he says: According to the Lutherans, "the fact that one man is converted under the call of the Gospel and not another, that one accepts and another rejects the offered mercy, is to be referred solely to the fact that one does, and the other does not resist that influence." Lutherans who are in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions will say: The fact that one man is converted under the call of the Gospel, is to be referred solely to the grace of God, non-resisting not being antecedent but consequent

to the operation of grace. The fact, however, that another man is not converted, is to be referred solely to man's voluntary resistance (Formula of Concord, S. D., XI. §§ 57–64, p. 716).

To this position the following objection is urged: If conversion is exclusively the effect of divine grace, or if conversion depends upon grace only and in no way on man's "conduct," "self-determination," etc., then God appears to pass by some men with his converting or regenerating grace. We hold fast, however, that a converted person is such only by the grace of God; while on the contrary, an unconverted person is such by his own fault, because he wantonly resists the grace of God. We have here before us a great mystery. We, of course, know of *two* ways by which we might explain away this mystery. We might have recourse to an absolute decree of reprobation and say: God's converting grace is not *universal;* consequently only some men are converted. But this way of solving the mystery—the *Calvinistic* way—is contrary to the Scriptures (1 Tim. ii. 4; Acts xiii. 46; vii. 51); hence we can not make use of it. Or we might say: conversion does not depend upon grace alone, but to some extent also on man's conduct, self-determination, etc., and this is the reason why not all men are converted. But as this way of explaining the mystery—the *synergistic* way—is also at war with the clear statements of Scripture, we leave the mystery unsolved, hoping for a solution

in the world to come. In the meantime we abide by the Word of God spoken through Hosea: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed *thyself*; but *in me* is thine help" (Hosea xiii. 9).

OF PREDESTINATION.

The distinguishing feature of our doctrine concerning predestination or election may be briefly stated thus: We differ from all those who in any way limit either *universal* or *free* grace.

There is no predestination to death. As to universal grace we teach that God's earnest, sincere, and efficacious grace extends to all men alike, in such a manner, that all those who remain unbelievers, remain such solely by their own fault. We, therefore, *reject* the distinction between *common* grace and *efficacious* (regenerating) grace, the former extending to all men, the latter being granted to the elect only. For the grace granted to those who remain unbelievers and against which the unbelievers harden themselves, Holy Scripture clearly describes as sincere and efficacious grace (Acts xiii. 46; Matt. xxiii. 37; Acts vii. 51). Even those passages of Scripture that treat of *obduration* inflicted by God on some persons, do not prove that God passed them by, but rather that He visited these with his saving grace, for obduration is represented by Holy Scripture as a punishment for *contemning* and *resisting* the grace of God. Yea, according to Scripture, some of those who are ac-

tually lost, enjoy even a more abundant measure of grace than some of those who are actually saved (Matt. xii. 41). We teach and confess that damnation comes upon men not for want of grace on the part of God, but for contempt of grace on the part of men (Acts xiii. 46; Matt. xi. 25). There are, indeed, some historical facts (e. g., that many nations are destitute of the preaching of the Gospel) which present a seeming contradiction to the universality of grace. But we deem Holy Scripture to be clearer than history. In spite of all *seeming* contradictions, we abide by the clear statements of the Scripture asserting God's earnest, sincere, and efficacious grace to be universal (1 Tim. ii. 4; Ez. xxxiii. 11). There is no predestination to unbelief and damnation.

There is a predestination to salvation. Holy Scripture, although utterly silent on a predestination to death, clearly teaches a predestination to *salvation*, pertaining not to all men, but only to those who are actually saved. Holy Scripture clearly reveals the fact that all those who are actually converted, preserved in faith, and saved, by the divinely established common way of salvation, are *from eternity* in God's counsel elected and predestined to be saved in this way and in this order, Eph. i. 3–6; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. "The eternal election or predestination of God"—the Formula of Concord says—"that is, the ordaining of God unto salvation, does not pertain both to the

good and the bad, but only to the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life, before the foundation of the world, as Paul, Eph. i. 4, 5, declares: "He hath chosen us in Christ Jesus, and predestinated us unto the adoption of children."

Causes of eternal election. God elected those who are elected solely out of His *mercy* and on account of *Christ's merit* earned for all. Election has not taken place on account of *anything good*, even not on account of *faith*, which God foresaw in the elect. According to the universal Christian order of salvation, all those who are actually converted and saved, are indebted for their conversion and salvation to God's free grace in Christ, their conversion and salvation being in no way secured or promoted by anything good found in themselves. Even so their *eternal election* to conversion and salvation is not dependent on or conditioned by anything good found in themselves, be it called "good works," or "good conduct," or "self-determination," etc., but eternal election solely flows from God's *free grace* in Christ. This doctrine, and none other, is revealed in Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture not only teaches that God has chosen us *in Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace* (Eph. i. 4–6), but expressly denies that there be a cause of election *in man;* "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose

and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9; John xv. 16.) In this sense St. Paul calls election "the election of *grace*," adding for the purpose of explanation as to what "grace" is: "and if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 5, 6). The Lutheran Church confesses concerning the causes of election: "The following doctrine is *false and erroneous*, namely, that not the mercy of God alone, and the most holy merit of Christ are the cause, but that *in us also* there is a cause of the election of God, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life." This is Lutheran doctrine! The doctrine that God elected on account of foreseen "good conduct," "self-determination," "non-resistance," etc., we hold to be both un-Lutheran and unchristian, denying free grace, and thus falsifying the Christian way of salvation.

Relation of eternal election to the faith of the elect. In the decree of eternal predestination the *faith* of the elect is not *presupposed* (as is assumed by the theory that predestination took place "in foresight of faith)," but *included.* For God did not first elect them to salvation absolutely, and *after that* decree to grant them faith as the means of obtaining salvation, but when God elected them He at the same time and in the same decree decreed to grant them faith and perseverance in faith. As God *in time* unites His children to himself by giv-

ing them faith, so *in eternity* he united His children to himself by decreeing to give them faith. The very substance of eternal election consists in this, that God decreed to grant his children faith in Christ and preserve them therein. "God took" —the Formula of Concord says—"so deep an interest in the conversion, righteousness, and salvation of each Christian, and so faithfully provided for these, that before the foundation of the world, in His counsel and purpose, He ordained the manner in which He would bring me to salvation, and preserve me there." If, therefore, the question be asked whether the faith that is found in the elect in time, in the order of thought precedes their eternal election as a cause, condition, etc., or follows after it as a result, the latter must be affirmed and the former denied. For in all passages of Scripture treating of this matter, not only faith, but the entire state of grace with all the spiritual blessings bestowed upon the Christians in time, are represented as *flowing from* their eternal election, Eph. i. 3–5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: *According as he hath chosen us* in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy* and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us *unto the adoption of children*" etc., Acts xiii. 48: "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. See: 2 Tim. i. 9; 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14; Rom. viii.

28–39. Hence the Formula of Concord states: "The eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but through his gracious will and good pleasure *in Christ Jesus*, is also the *cause* which procures, works, facilitates, and promotes our salvation and whatever pertains to it." And it is this relation of the eternal election to their faith and continuance in faith that the Christians find such a precious *consolation* in the doctrine of election, as the Formula of Concord puts it: "This doctrine also affords the eminent and precious consolation, that God took so deep an interest in the conversion, righteousness, and salvation of each Christian, and so faithfully provided for these, that before the foundation of the world, in His counsel and purpose, He ordained the manner in which He would bring me to salvation, and preserve me there; again, that he wished to secure my salvation so truly and firmly, that in his eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, he decreed it, and to secure it, placed it in the omnipotent hands of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, out of which none shall pluck us, John x. 28. For, if our salvation were committed unto us, it might easily be lost through the weakness and wickedness of our flesh, or be taken and plucked out of our hands, by the fraud and power of the devil and of the world."

OBJECTION TO THIS DOCTRINE.

To this doctrine the following objection is made by Calvinists: To affirm an election to salvation, and to deny an election to death, is an "illogical" position, according to the rules of human reason. We reply that we are well aware of this, and, morever, that we know all the means employed both by Calvinists and Synergists, to remedy this "inconsistency." But this illogical position is that of the Scripture. Holy Scripture clearly teaches a predestination to salvation, which is a cause of the conversion and salvation of the elect; but it does not mention a preterition or predestination to death, which is a cause of the unbelief and damnation of those who perish. This is clearly seen from Acts xiii, 48 compared with v. 46. Verse 48 we hear of *believing Gentiles*, and their faith is referred to their eternal election: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Verse 46 we hear of *unbelieving Jews*, but their unbelief is not referred to an eternal predestination to unbelief and death, or to a lack of grace on the part of God, but solely to the Jews' wilful resistance to God's sincere and efficacious grace; for Paul and Barnabas address the Jews thus: "Seeing ye put it (the Word of God) from you, and judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." It is sound theology to speak where Scripture speaks, and to be silent where Scripture is silent.

The Synergists urge the objection: If you insist upon the grace of God and the merit of Christ as being the only causes of eternal election, denying that election was also on account of man's foreseen "good conduct," "self-determination," etc., you will be forced to admit that God's sincere and efficacious grace is not universal. This conclusion, however, we do not admit, since Scripture does not admit it. Holy Scripture, in revealing God's eternal election, never makes it dependent on man's "good conduct," etc., but merely on God's free grace in Christ. Scripture at the same time maintains the universality of grace. And so do we, maintaining unimpared both *free* and *universal* grace.

But finally our doctrine, *to wit*, that election "is also the *cause* which procures and promotes our salvation and whatever pertains to it," is charged with introducing a *twofold* way of salvation, the way of *grace* pertaining to all men, and the way of *election* pertaining to those only who are actually saved. In answering this objection, we might simply refer to Holy Scripture, which plainly asserts election to be a cause of the salvation of the elect. But by duly considering the matter it is easily understood that we do not introduce *two* ways of salvation, but maintain the *one* universal way of grace in regard to the elect also. For it is one and the same efficacious, saving grace by which the children of God are saved, and against

which the children of unbelief harden themselves. And as the children of God during this life are brought to conversion, justification, sanctification, etc., *out of pure, free grace* in Christ without any merits of their own, even so they are *from eternity elected* to salvation and whatever pertains to it, not in consideration of any good conduct found with them, but *out of mere grace* in Christ. Hence the one way of grace is not destroyed by this doctrine, but rather *confirmed* by it, as the Formula of Concord expressly remarks: "It *confirms* most forcibly the article, that we are justified and saved by *pure grace* for the sake of Christ alone, without any of our works and merit." But when it is affirmed that conversion and salvation do not depend on grace only, but to some extent on man's conduct also, and, consequently, that *eternal election* also took place in consideration or foresight of this conduct of man, then, indeed, the one old Christian way of salvation is entirely abandoned and a new way of salvation is introduced, altogether different from the revealed way of grace.

The mystery to be acknowledged in this doctrine. There are some things in this doctrine which we know, and there are others which we know not. We exactly know the reason why those who are actually saved, are elected, brought to faith and preserved in it. It is, so Scripture clearly reveals, out of God's pure, free mercy in Christ. We also know the reason why those who

perish are not converted or not preserved in faith, and thus go to perdition. It is, as Scripture likewise plainly teaches, from their own fault, namely, from their obstinate resistance to the saving grace of God. But we do not know the reason why one person *in preference to another* is converted and saved, *as all men by nature are equally guilty and dead in sin.* By acknowledging a mystery right here we must not be charged with *Cryptocalvinism. For this and none other* is the doctrinal position of the *Lutheran* Church. The Formula of Concord stating the case thus: "that God gives his Word to one region, but not to another; or that one man is hardened, blinded, and given over to a reprobate mind, but that another, though equally guilty, is converted to God," refers us to Rom. xi. 33, 34: "O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord?" The same position is, as with one voice, avowed by the great Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century. *Martin Chemnitz e. g.*, writes thus: "Our Catechism, in the third article of our Christian faith, says that by his own reason or strength man cannot believe in, or come to Jesus Christ, but that the Holy Ghost must bring him to such faith, *for faith is a gift of God; how, then, is it that God does not bestow such faith upon the heart of Judas, so that he also could have believed* that Christ could help

him? *Here we must restrain our questions* and say (Rom. xi.): 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!' *We are neither able, nor bidden to search this out*, and must not be absorbed in such thoughts." The mystery which the Lutheran Church acknowledges at this point may only be solved either by denying with the Calvinists God's *universal* grace, or by denying with the Synergists God's *free* grace, as was shown before.

As to the dogmatical phrase (which was introduced into the Lutheran Church by *Aegidius Hunnius*) that election has taken place "in view of faith," we hold, in the first place, that it is not taken from the Holy Scriptures. In the passage Rom. viii. 29: "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," *foreknow* does not denote the simple foreknowledge of God—for thus a universal election would result, as God's simple foreknowledge extends to all men—but foreknow here is used in the sense of, "to appropriate, to make his own beforehand," as *know* and *foreknow* are used in other passages of Scripture, e. g., Amos iii. 2: "You only —O children of Israel—have I *known* of all the families of the earth." See Rom. xi. 2; Gal. iv. 9; Ps. i. 6. Hence the Formula of Concord paraphrases Rom. viii. 29, 30, thus: "Whom He did *predestinate, elect and ordain*, them He also called." In the second place, we hold, that the phrase "in

view of faith" is not found in the Lutheran Confessions; in the third place, that it does not solve the mystery, if at the same time the biblical doctrine be maintained that faith is a free gift of grace, and in no respect man's own work; in the fourth place that, if the phrase "in view of faith" be exchanged for "in view of man's *conduct*," "in view of man's *self-decision*," etc., the mystery, indeed, is solved, but by the key of *synergism*. The *Lutheran* grounds are entirely abandoned. For the Lutheran Church confesses: "The following doctrine is false and erroneous, namely, that not the mercy of God alone, and the most holy merit of Christ are the cause, but that *in us also* there is a cause of the election of God, on account of which God has elected unto everlasting life."

Assurance of election. That a believing Christian can become and be certain of his eternal election, is a matter of course with Holy Scripture, for Holy Scripture uses eternal election as a means to comfort the Christians in their temptations and tribulations; for instance, Rom. viii. 33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" As to the quality or character of certainty, it is best described as a certainty of *faith*, for it results, not from searching into the secret counsel of God, nor from hearing the law and its comminations, but by attending to and believing *the Gospel of Christ*, in whom eternal election has taken place in eternity and is now revealed in time.

The United Synod in the South

By REV. PROF. A. G. VOIGT, D. D., LL. D.

INTRODUCTORY.—The article on the United Synod in the first edition of this book, by the Rev. Edward T. Horn, D. D., LL. D., was in the main historical. That historical sketch has permanent value. But it was written only seven years after the organization of the United Synod and twenty years have elapsed since it appeared. In this period the United Synod has had a prosperous and progressive history; it has become a compact body, and it has undergone a vigorous development on the basis laid at its organization. A historical sketch now would necessarily be much more extended. It has appeared to the present writer that a less historical and more statical description of the United Synod will better serve the purpose of this book at this time. For this reason no attempt to revise the former article is made. The intrinsic value of that article cannot be superseded by any later writing. While attempting to prepare an entirely new article, the writer desires to record his great indebtedness to the former article by Dr. E. T. Horn.

TERRITORY.—The title of this body is The United

Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South, not of the South. Its territory does not extend to all the Southern States. Most of its churches are in the South Atlantic States, although there is a small Synod in Eastern Tennessee and another in Mississippi, and mission work is being done in Alabama. The Lutheran Church in the South is even now a kind of diaspora. The United Synod consists of groups of churches scattered about in different sections, with intervening stretches of territory, in which there are no Lutheran churches. It is by no means evenly distributed over the States which give names to the Southern Synods. Immigration in the eighteenth century and migration since then have for the most part determined the location of the groups of churches. Such groups are found in southeastern Georgia, where the Salzburg refugees settled; in Orangeburg County in South Carolina, and again in the territory west and northwest of the city of Columbia, S. C.; in the western portion of North Carolina, but east of the mountains, the cities of Salisbury and Hickory constituting the two focuses of this group; a belt in the southwestern end of Virginia extending into eastern Tennessee to Knoxville and its vicinity; another belt in the Shenandoah valley of Virginia; a small group in southwestern Georgia, and two in Mississippi, due to migrations from South Carolina in the nineteenth century. In the larger cities, Rich-

mond, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, Atlanta and Jacksonville, there are Lutheran churches, to which must be added a mission in Birmingham, one in Chattanooga, and missions in some of the growing towns of Florida. There are large sections of territory, including important cities, in which there is no Lutheran population or in which the scattered Lutherans have not yet been gathered into congregations. The United Synod has a large and difficult mission field on its own territory. Notwithstanding this total lack of territorial compactness, the United Synod is a compact and homogeneous body. A common ancestry, common traditions of faith and religious life, and a development under common influences have conspired to bring its scattered elements into vital unity and have made of it a confessionally Lutheran American Church.

Language.—The United Synod is the most purely American part of the Lutheran Church in this country. It has less foreign-born membership than any other Lutheran body. It also receives less increment by immigration. Although several decades ago many Germans came, especially to the coast cities, but few come now. Norfolk and its vicinity is an exception to this statement. There have gathered there in recent years quite a number of Germans and many more Scandinavians. The growth of the United Synod depends chiefly upon holding its own children, and next upon gathering

in Lutherans who move to the South from the North. The membership of the churches in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, eastern Tennessee and Mississippi, is, for the most part, made up of the descendants of the immigrants who came into the Southern States in the eighteenth century. Consequently the United Synod is almost entirely an English-speaking body. There is no longer a single purely German church in it, and there are only two which have regular services in the German language along with English services.

From this predominant Americanism of the United Synod it follows that it is entirely free from the vexations caused elsewhere by the language question. The transition to English was made in most places long ago, and in the few churches in which more recently the English language was introduced and the German language discontinued, the transition was happily made without friction.

A more important consequence of the Americanism of the Lutheran Church in the South is the fact that it was less affected by the influences which have flowed into other parts of the country from Germany for the last three-quarters of a century. Such influences reached it for the most part only indirectly, as they came in from the North and were modified by prior absorption into the life of the Church in this country. A correlative consequence was that the Lutheran Church in the South was

more exposed to the effects exerted by the general religious environment, which in the South is of a decidedly Reformed type.

That the feeble Lutheran Church in the South, struggling through the nineteenth century for its perpetuity, has under such conditions attained to a sound confessional Lutheranism is a noteworthy fact, especially when it is remembered that Lutherans formed so small a part of the entire population. When the United Synod was organized in 1886, its membership was only 30,000, and now it is but 50,000. This adherence to Lutheranism is an evidence of the conservative spirit of the Lutheran population. The loss of many who were absorbed by other communions is to be regretted, but the persistence with which a far greater number clung to the Lutheran name and to what the feeble Lutheran Church had to offer, deserves admiration. The want of an English Lutheran literature was deeply felt in former days. The attainment of a sound Lutheranism in spite of this want is an evidence of the very great value of the little that existed, and of the fidelity with which the few books that were available were studied by pastors and laymen. One work deserves special mention in this connection, the New Market edition of the Book of Concord, first published in 1851.

General Doctrinal Character.—The United Synod has no distinctive doctrines apart from the

distinctive doctrines of common confessional Lutheranism. It was born not in controversy, but in peace; not in disagreement, but in the realization of concord in the doctrines set forth in the Book of Concord; not in antagonism to any other Lutheran body, but in the desire to promote "unification of all Lutherans in one orthodox faith." Nor has the United Synod been agitated by serious doctrinal controversy since its organization in 1886. Discussions in regard to stricter or more lax practices have never led to divisions nor issued in official pronouncements of distinctive developments of confessional position. The spirit of concord, working towards a more perfect unanimity in all parts, has been the prevailing spirit, and at the present time the United Synod rejoices that by the grace of God it has been stablished, strengthened and settled in the doctrines of the Reformation as formulated in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

The History Back of Its Basis.—This history has been clearly and fully narrated by Dr. E. T. Horn in the first edition of this book. A briefer account will be presented here. The name United Synod indicates that previous to its organization there was disunion among the Lutherans in the South Atlantic States. The line of cleavage was marked by the opposing attitude of the two factions in relation to the General Synod from the date of its organization in 1820. The doctrinal position,

the practical undertakings, the endeavors to increase efficiency by organization, the fluctuations in the appreciation of historical Lutheranism, the openness to influences that came from without the Lutheran Church; in short, all that characterized the General Synod in the first half of its history, was shared by most Lutherans in the South. They were organized in district Synods in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. But there were Lutherans not a few who from the beginning were opposed to the General Synod and all that it represented, its spirit of organization as well as its lax doctrinal position. These became united in a body called the Tennessee Synod, a body which still exists by that name, although it has no longer any churches in Tennessee. The name arose from the territory in which it was organized. Its strength always has been in western North Carolina, although it has a number of churches in Virginia and South Carolina. The Holston Synod now occupies the field in eastern Tennessee. From the beginning these Lutherans cultivated a strict adherence to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the writings of Luther, lived and labored with the conviction of a vocation to defend the faith, and developed a jealousy of the concentration of power in organizations. Time happily brought changes. Lutherans in the South could not remain untouched by the influences that were at work in other parts of

the country. The increasing appreciation of confessional Lutheranism, which in the middle half of the nineteenth century passed over from Germany into and through this country, also gradually permeated the South. It served to deepen the devotion of the Tennessee Synod to the historic Lutheran Confessions, and to awaken in the other Synods a growing esteem and affection for the same Confessions. Hence, when the war brought about a disruption of the General Synod and a separate Southern body, the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America was formed at Concord in 1863, the breath of a more conscious distinctive Lutheranism in it was soon perceptible. In the crippled condition of the country during and after the war the Southern General Synod never was able to attain to much strength and vigor. Peace and more settled conditions first had to come. The Tennessee Synod was not a part of it. But the desire for union began to stir. At the convention of 1867 a commissioner from the Tennessee Synod to confer with the General Synod (South) upon the subject of union was received. The reply to his overture was significant:

"*Resolved,* That we will cordially receive said Synod as an integral part of this body, on the truly Lutheran basis which we have adopted, and in accordance with which we feel bound as an ecclesiastical body to withhold our sanction or *im-*

primatur from any religious publication, of whatever form, which shall inculcate principles opposed to the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession as construed and defended by our Church, in her symbolical writings."

These negotiations led to no practical result. But what is significant in this reply is that here already was an anticipation of the acceptance of all the Symbolical Books. However, the time was not yet ripe for that step and for a union on that basis. After a number of years the desire for union assumed the form of an endeavor to come together in an entirely new organization on the basis of the Book of Concord. A diet of representatives from seven Southern Synods assembled at Salisbury in 1884 and approved a confessional basis of union and a draft of a proposed constitution. At a second diet, at Roanoke in 1886, the work of union was consummated and the first session of the United Synod was held.

The doctrinal basis, as contained in the constitution, is in the terms following:

"The doctrinal basis of the organization shall be:

"1. The Holy Scriptures, the inspired Writings of the Old and New Testaments, the only standard of doctrine and church discipline.

"2. As a true and faithful exhibition of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures in regard to matters of faith and practice, the three ancient symbols, the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Faith; also the other Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, viz.: The Apology, the Smalcald Articles,

the Smaller and Larger Catechisms of Luther and the Formula of Concord, consisting of the Epitome and Full Declaration, as they are set forth, defined and published in the Christian Book of Concord or the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, published in the year 1580 (see the Epitome, *Of the Compendious Rule and Standard* and the *Solid Declaration—Preface*), as true and Scriptural developments of the doctrines taught in the Augsburg Confession, and in the perfect harmony of one and the same pure, Scriptural faith."

The union was formed, and still it required a number of years to coalesce. It was peculiarly difficult for the Tennessee Synod with its distinctive development to become adjusted to perfect co-operation in the practical work in which the United Synod, carrying forward the work begun by the General Synod South, labored to fulfill its mission at home and abroad and to promote its upbuilding. The discussion of the questions connected with pulpit and altar fellowship, with Chiliasm and with secret societies, which had started in the middle West, and from there had spread to other parts of the country, also penetrated the South. Not many years before the organization of the United Synod the Tennessee Synod had taken its position moderately, yet firmly, on these questions in favor of a strict practice. The United Synod declined to legislate on these subjects. Accordingly the Tennessee Synod, in order not to be inconsistent with its own principles, felt unable to participate in the common missionary and educational operations of the United

Synod unless these principles were recognized in them. It was a severe strain upon the bond of union and there was danger of a new rupture. The difficulty was finally overcome at the convention held at Winston-Salem, N. C., in 1900, by the adoption of several resolutions, the chief of which is inserted here:

"That in view of the position heretofore occupied by the Tennessee Synod with regard to full and active co-operation with this body, this United Synod does now assure the Tennessee Synod that it is most sincerely desirous, in the prosecution of our common work, that nothing may be done calculated to burden the consciences of the brethren of any of our Synods. All our Synods are founded on the Word of God, and the confessions of the Church in accordance with it, and all are equally bound to frame their practice and fulfill their duty in accordance with a candid and conscientious conviction of the true and proper sense of that Word, and our confessions on it founded."

Since then the Tennessee Synod has cordially co-operated in the common work, and with united effort all the Synods in the South are now working together to carry out practically the aim of the United Synod as it is set forth in its constitution in these terms:

"The object and aim of the United Synod shall be outward expression of the spiritual unity of the Synods concerned; mutual strengthening in faith and confession; unification of all Lutherans in one orthodox faith, and mutual co-operation in the promotion of the more general interests of the Church;

as books of worship, liturgies, theological seminaries, charitable institutions, immigrant missions, foreign missions and important home missionary operations."

Doctrinal Position and Attitude.—The United Synod has devoted its energies to practical work rather than to doctrinal discussion. The inference must not be drawn from this statement that it holds the doctrines of its confessional basis laxly. The Church in the South is ardently devoted to the doctrinal system embraced in the Symbolical Books. Having come to an appreciation of them through earnest study in the pursuit of peace and the removal of division, Lutherans in the South know the value of these doctrines. They are vital in the life of congregations. There is no feeling that they are in any part becoming obsolete. In the quiet of their studies and in conferences the pastors exercise themselves to become more perfectly grounded in the doctrinal inheritance of the Lutheran Church. At the same time a deeping indoctrination and a more perfect training in Lutheran usages are steadily carried on in the congregations. The Southern Lutheran believes without qualification in the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He believes that the doctrines contained in Luther's Catechism, the Augsburg Confession and the other confessions in the Book of Concord are grounded in the Word of the Scriptures. He especially realizes the vital importance of the doctrine of justifi-

cation by faith with its presuppositions of original sin and the condemnatory character of all sin, and with its implications of the divinity of Christ and the vicarious atonement by His merits. He is very much awake to the importance of the means of grace, Word and sacraments, for the application of salvation, including the realistic conception of baptism as a means of regeneration and of the communion as the imparting of the true body and blood of Christ.

Lutherans in the United Synod are averse to the speculative and critical spirit, which resolves these doctrines into imperfect expressions of abstract ideas or disintegrates them into mere changing historical conceptions. The confessional doctrines are for them a substantial body of divinely given truth, which they are unwilling to have distorted, mutilated, curtailed or diluted. Modern speculative and critical attempts at restatement and reinterpretation of Christianity have found as little entrance into the United Synod as anywhere.

Firm as they are in their convictions, Southern Lutherans are generally averse to controversy. This is probably the true explanation of the conservative attitude of the United Synod towards the questions connected with pulpit and altar fellowship and secret societies. There are differences of view on these questions existing in the United Synod. But the disposition has always been not to fight the differences

out, but to wait for time to bring about unanimity in regard to them. In the formation of the United Synod peculiar circumstances thrust these questions upon the notice of the body; but it declined to legislate in regard to them because it was unwilling to go through the throes of controversy which a decision upon them involved. Combined with this aversion to controversy there exists an evangelical impatience of legal constraint, which impels men to act upon principle rather than by rule. As a matter of fact and actual practice Lutheran ministers in the United Synod do not invite others to occupy their pulpits indiscriminately; and, although in some churches the custom of extending a general invitation at communion still continues from earlier times, the practice is diminishing, and in most churches it has passed away with the introduction of the Common Service. As to secret societies, there is not much agitation against them except in the Tennessee Synod, and a number of United Synod ministers are known to be members of such orders; but the sentiment of most ministers is unfavorable to them. It has already been stated that the Tennessee Synod is unique among the Synods constituting the United Synod in having rules against pulpit and altar fellowship and secret societies; and the United Synod has pledged itself not to employ in its general work, in its theological seminary, in its mission operations, in the editing of its official organ, any person

who would foster secretism or unionistic fellowship.

Relation to Other Communions.—In relation to other communions the United Synod is neither exclusive nor undifferentiating. Recognition of common Christianity and general religious and moral interests prevents the spirit of aloofness; but consciousness of the difference between the Lutheran Church and others begets a reserve towards other bodies and towards interdenominational movements and organizations. The United Synod and the Synods that compose it, do not exchange delegates or official visitors with any but Lutheran bodies, and in the recognition of occasional visitors at Synodical conventions a well-defined distinction is made between Lutherans and others. On the other hand invitations to occupy pulpits of other denominations at Synodical conventions are freely accepted. The United Synod has, during its existence never participated in any interdenominational organization, but pastors and laymen in the South frequently join in interdenominational movements. Co-operation with others, if it appears really profitable, is not regarded as a violation of confessional consistency. At the same time there is a general disposition to exercise caution against entangling alliances. Lutherans in the South do not generally seek to make themselves prominent in interdenominational associations. But ministers of

the United Synod freely and cordially enter into local ministerial associations. The general attitude of the Lutheran Church in the South towards other communions is to wish them well, but to do its share of common Christian work in its own distinctive way. Rigid exclusiveness is quite foreign to its spirit, but regardlessness for Lutheran consistency equally so.

Piety.—The true character of an ecclesiastical body is not decided by its formal doctrinal statements alone. The tone and temper in which these are maintained and applied are also important. To illustrate what is meant by this statement let it be recalled that the pietism of Spener at the end of the seventeenth century involved no conscious departure from the orthodox Lutheran theology, and yet there was a great difference in the early part of the eighteenth century between a pietist and an orthodox anti-pietist in the Lutheran Church. As was the case elsewhere on the Atlantic seaboard, the Lutheran Church in the South entered upon the historic inheritance of Lutheranism as it was modified by pietism. To this day a large measure of this pietistic temper has been retained. Vital godliness, consistent Christian conduct, the practice of piety and active Christianity are realized to be the end and aim of Church life, and the Lutheran doctrines are loved and taught as means to produce this end. It is not the theologically speculative side of the

doctrinal system nor its formal logical consistency that is of supreme interest to the Southern Lutheran mind; it is rather the working power, the dynamic of doctrinal truth and the relation of theology to life and practice that is of interest. In other words, doctrine is studied and held fast as the basis of effective preaching. The Lutheran system is accepted from the heart as the expression of the truth divinely given by revelation, divinely recorded in the Holy Scriptures by inspiration, and divinely efficacious to unite the soul to God in a living faith and in a pious life.

Trend Toward Stricter Lutheranism.—Almost a generation has passed since the formation of the United Synod. From the questionings and searchings of the period preceding that consummation to find the true Lutheran doctrine the present generation has inherited the tendency towards strict, uncompromising, undiluted Lutheranism in faith and usages. If any doctrine or usage can be proved historically Lutheran, that will secure its acceptance in any Southern Lutheran Synod. The adjective Lutheran is very much in use to characterize and to test things. But the standard by which matters are judged to be Lutheran is the historic standard of what prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An example will illustrate in a striking way this tendency to a stiffer Lutheranism. A generation ago it was not uncommon to

speak of confirmation as joining the Church. Even the hymnal of the General Synod South, which remained in use until 1906, classed confirmation hymns under the heading, "Joining the Church." Now this form of expression is discountenanced and stress is laid upon the fact that baptized infants are already members of the Church. The former custom of having a series of services, culminating in what was called "Throwing open the doors of the Church" for the reception of members, has also passed away. Catechetical preparation for confirmation is the usage now. But it must also be remarked that this tendency towards a more rigid Lutheranism is tempered on the one hand by the practical disposition to labor and to wait until education has prepared minds for other views and other practices, and on the other by a non-exclusive spirit which does not shun contact with Christians of other communions.

Practical Activity.—The best thought and strength of the United Synod are not given to learned theology, but to Christian endeavor. This is not due to a lack of scholarly taste or a want of theological interest. But in the face of immediate constructive demands, pastoral, institutional and administrative, the leisure for concentrated, consecutive study cannot easily be found. Moreover, small salaries forbid the purchase of large private libraries, and public libraries stocked with theological

literature are not often within reach. In spite of these drawbacks, the Lutheran ministers of the South, with the help of such books as are available, have maintained a creditable degree of scholarship, and a few names might be honorably mentioned of living men who have contributed to the literature of the Lutheran Church in this country. But generally the reading and study of Southern Lutherans is necessarily directed to the immediate work before them, the work of building up churches and institutions and of perfecting organization and efficiency. The necessities of an *ecclesia plantanda,* a Church that is still in the process of foundation, draw the best efforts of the body away from more technical studies to practical activities. Missions, educational and charitable work are the paramount interests. A growing benevolence may justly be claimed as a distinctive feature. In proportion to the amount of wealth held by Southern Lutherans, who are still for the most part a rural people, their benevolence measures up to the highest level found among Lutherans in this country, and possibly exceeds it. The financial condition of the South must be borne in mind. It is a money-borrowing, not a money-lending section of country. The larger industrial and commercial enterprises in the South are dependent upon capital borrowed elsewhere. People who are regarded as living in affluence in the South would hardly be considered rich in the North. It is

doubtful whether there is a single millionaire in the Southern Lutheran Church. Ministers and professors work for meager salaries, because salaries are graded by the scale of living in the congregations. When these conditions are taken into consideration it is greatly to the credit of the United Synod that it has so many fairly well-equipped institutions and carries on so vigorous a mission work. A clearer idea of how faith expresses itself in deeds in the United Synod will be gained by the consideration of particular data.

Missions.—Since 1892 the United Synod has had its own foreign mission in Japan. The work was begun in Saga and has since extended through the island of Kiushiu to six cities and several minor stations. The missionary force consists of 5 ordained missionaries, 3 wives of missionaries, and 10 native workers. Two young women were sent out just recently. A large and rapidly growing school for boys has been established at Kumamoto with a faculty of 19 professors, 15 of them natives, the others missionaries. A Bible or theological school for future evangelists is also maintained in the same city.

The home mission work of the United Synod has its ground in two facts: the removal of members of its country churches to the rapidly growing towns, and the collecting of Lutherans from all sections in the larger cities of the South. In the

smaller towns most of the mission work is cared for by the district Synods. The larger points are directly cared for by the general body through its Home Mission Board. At present this Board supports 15 missions in the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi. The district Synods support 50 more missions. For a small body this Home Mission work is a heavy burden, but it is borne courageously and liberally.

Charitable Institutions.—The United Synod has its own Orphan Home, located at Salem, Va., in which over one hundred orphans are provided for. The South Carolina Synod has a new charitable institution in the Lowman Home for Incurables, located at White Rock, S. C. This institution will probably soon pass over to the direct control of the United Synod. The Lutheran churches of Charleston, S. C., maintain the Francke Home for the Aged.

Publication.—The United Synod owns a valuable Publication House in Columbia, S. C., from which issue two church papers, the *Lutheran Church Visitor,* the official organ of the United Synod, and *Tidings,* for the young, besides other publications, among them the Book of Worship and a Sunday School Hymnal. This Publication House carries on a regular business in books and church supplies, and also a general printing business.

Educational Institutions.—In proportion to its strength the Lutheran Church in the bounds of the United Synod has more higher grade educational institutions than any Lutheran body in the country, and probably more college students, both male and female. There are no parochial schools, but there are two colleges for men, one co-educational college, four colleges for women, one collegiate institution for boys and one seminary for girls. In these various institutions there are about 1000 students. For a body of 50,000 communicants this is certainly a considerable educational work. These institutions, together with the theological seminary owned by the United Synod, have property in grounds and buildings worth about $900,000.00. As has just been indicated, the United Synod has under its own immediate government and control a theological seminary, which is located at Columbia, S. C., and which is housed in a beautiful new building. Roanoke College and Roanoke College for Women, both located at Salem, Va., are under the direction of the Virginia and Southwestern Virginia Synods. Lenoir College, at Hickory, N. C., is the institution of the Tennessee Synod, and Newberry College, at Newberry, S. C., is the institution of the South Carolina Synod, which also owns Summerland College for women, recently established near Leesville, S. C. The North Carolina Collegiate Institute and Mont Amoena Seminary, one for boys and the

other for girls, are both located at Mount Pleasant, N. C., and are both under the control of the North Carolina Synod. Two colleges for women, Elizabeth College, at Charlotte, N. C., and Marion College, at Marion, Va., are privately owned institutions, but managed under Lutheran auspices.

USAGES.—The first characteristic to note in regard to usages in the United Synod is the spirit of liberty in respect to outward forms of church life. Fixed forms are neither shunned nor slavishly observed. Both ministers and congregations assert their freedom and sometimes their individualism according to circumstances in all that pertains to the external conduct of worship or church work.

A second characteristic is that the prevailing forms of church life agree with those in other parts of the Lutheran Church in this country. Extremes are avoided. Nothing like a tendency towards ritualism exists. The United Synod is heartily but moderately liturgical. The spirit of freedom leads to a ready submission to improved forms as soon as good reason is shown for a change. Hence the changes in outward usages in the South have kept pace with those in other sections of the Lutheran Church.

These general statements having been premised, it will be convenient to consider particular usages under three heads: The form of public worship; the instruction of the Church; special services.

The Form of Public Worship.—For the last fifty years the churches in the South have been gradually trained to use and love liturgical service. One of the first acts of the General Synod (South) after its organization during the war was the preparation and publication of a Book of Worship, which contained a liturgical service. Interest in it grew rapidly, and it steadily made its way towards general acceptance. Out of the effort to improve this Book of Worship came the impulse to the preparation of the Common Service. In his article on the United Synod in the former edition of this book Dr. Edward T. Horn has so interestingly described these facts that his excellent account is here inserted. After describing the Book of Worship of the General Synod (South) Dr. Horn continues:

"Meanwhile the General Synod was engaged in a continual effort to amend and improve the book. Every successive edition showed the removal of typographical errors and the improvement of rubrical directions. In 1876 committees were appointed to revise various parts of the book; and at that meeting the committee was instructed 'to confer with the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod in the United States and the Evangelical Lutheran General Council in America with regard to the feasibility of adopting but one book, containing the same hymns and the same order of services and liturgic forms, to be used in the public worship of God in all the English-speaking Evangelical Lutheran churches in the United States.' This was the beginning of the movement to secure a Common Service. It had been suggested in 1870, in a letter from the venerable Dr. Bachman to the General Synod, but the time was not then ripe. The matter was

brought up again in 1878, and steps were taken to urge the northern bodies to a definite reply. At the same meeting the committee was enlarged and the object of the continuous amendment of the Service was declared to be 'the ultimate attainment of the distinctively Lutheran cultus, breathing the spirit of our Evangelical faith, and which is a legitimate outgrowth therefrom, and at the same time is in full accord with the Service of the Primitive Church.' In 1882 the General Synod referred to this committee many proposed changes, and in 1884 adopted a long series of them; so that, if the Common Service had not been finally adopted, the Southern Book of Worship, in its new edition, would have contained the Introits and Collects for the Church Year, the prescription of the Epistles and Gospels, of the Nicene Creed and of the Proper Prefaces in the Communion Service. The determination was asserted 'to prosecute the revision of the Book of Worship in honest fidelity to the spirit and history of the Lutheran Church, in order that, at all events, we may possess a ritual as nearly correct as it can be made.' In 1886 the Protocol of the Joint Committee outlining the Common Service was presented and approved. The accession of the Tennessee and Holston Synods did not take from the liturgical spirit and zeal of the Southern churches. Before, they had used in many of their churches the Church Book, published by the General Council in 1868; based, like the Book of Worship, on the provisional service of the Pennsylvania Synod, and representing a liturgical progress which culminated in the Common Service. Accordingly the outline of the Common Service was adopted by the United Synod immediately on its organization, and in 1888 the complete manuscript was laid before it and approved. On the publication of the Common Service in 1888, it met with an immediate welcome in all the Southern Synods."

So for Dr. Horn, and we can continue and state that at the present time the Common Service is

generally used and loved both in country and city churches. It is not a slavish adherence to a prescribed formula. Many ministers have no hesitation about omitting it in part or as a whole, if they think the occasion or the peculiar character of the congregation requires it. There is a general avoidance of everything that may suggest formalism in the conduct of worship. Sunday morning sermons are generally preached from the Gospel or Epistle for the day, but not always. Ministers, for the most part, do not orientate during the reading of the prayers of the service, and in most churches free prayer is generally preferred to the reading of the general prayer. The ministerial robe is coming into more general vogue and is commonly worn in city and town churches, although in country churches it is generally not used. Paid choirs are infrequent and vested choirs still more so. The feeling among the laity is that the sermon is the essential part of the service. A commendable feature of Southern congregations is that they participate in the communion as a whole. It is not the custom for a large part of the congregation to go out when the communion service begins. The introduction of special preparatory services before communion has been attended with great difficulty. In most churches, even in cities, the order of confession and absolution is combined with the communion service. There has been great progress towards churchly architecture,

and it has become the rule in new or remodeled churches that the altar is placed in the center and elevated.

The Instruction of the Church.—Catechisation is universally approved and fostered by pastors, but it requires much effort on their part, especially in rural districts, to prevail on the laity to sustain their endeavors in behalf of this form of Christian training. However, in many city congregations the work of catechisation is regular, extended and well organized. By dint of constant insistence upon the importance of such training of the immature, a great improvement is being effected, and the prospect is that before many years thorough catechisation will become universal in the United Synod.

Sunday school work receives more favorable and steady attention. Even in rural churches there are excellent Sunday schools. Everywhere earnest efforts are made to improve the instruction and to grade the work. Particular attention is paid to teacher-training in the best schools, and annual summer normal schools for Sunday school workers, running for three or four days, have become an established institution in most Synods. Special attention is given to training the churches in the spirit of missions through the Sunday schools. Many of the Sunday schools in the South are in fact and not only in theory more than children's schools. Adult classes, in which the aged are often

found, are frequent not only in towns, but also in the country.

Special Services.—When special services are mentioned, Lutherans usually think of Lenten services. There has been a great advance in the observance of the Lenten season in recent years, but this advance has not so generally extended to the rural churches. On the other hand, it is quite common in the country to continue an old custom of having a week of daily services in the summer season, when it is much more convenient for country people to assemble for worship than in the busy spring, during the season of Lent. Week evening prayer meetings, which were formerly in vogue, have generally given way to midweek services of the Bible study order. In fact, in most places it has become difficult to maintain a vigorous midweek service of any kind. The special festivals of the Church Year, particularly Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday, are generally observed.

Polity.—The United Synod shares the general character of the Lutheran Church in giving less theoretical attention to forms of organization and government than to other matters. The polity that prevails in it is about the same as that which prevails generally in the Lutheran Church in this country. The existing forms of organization and government are due more to historical development under given conditions than to construction according to

abstract theories of church polity. The general idea which underlies the existing constitutions is that expressed in the old Formula for Government and Discipline of the General Synod (South), which is based on earlier formulas, as follows:

"As order is necessary to the prosperity of every associate body, and as Jesus Christ has left no specific form of government and discipline for His Church, it is the duty of every individual church, or association of churches, to adopt such regulations as appear to them most consistent with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament and best calculated to subserve the interests of the Church of Christ."

The unit of organization is the congregation. Congregations administer most of their affairs through church councils, consisting of elders and deacons. Discipline is usually exercised through the church council. The right of appeal to Synod as a higher body is recognized. The Synods are constituted of ministers and congregations. At meetings every congregation, or every group of congregations served by one pastor, is entitled to representation by one lay delegate. Synods are in the main only advisory bodies, but not entirely so. They have judicial and executive powers to a certain degree. They exercise discipline over ministers and receive appeals from the judgment of congregations. They have the power of ordination to the ministry and of installation of pastors. They own and administer property in their own right.

The United Synod, according to its constitution, has only "advisory and recommendatory" powers, except in certain matters, defined in the constitution, in regard to which it has "such powers as the Synods composing it may delegate to it." According to these provisions, apportionments, for instance, for general causes are not an assessment, but recommendations, which must first be approved by a district Synod before it becomes properly operative in it. The United Synod has no judicial powers. There is no right of appeal to it, the Synods being the final court of appeal. It has no power of ordination to the ministry. The missionaries it appoints must receive ordination from district Synods. But it has power to own and administer institutions and property in its own right. So it owns mission property, a publication house, an orphan home, and a theological seminary.

The United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America

By REV. PROF. F. A. SCHMIDT, D. D.

NORWEGIAN immigration into the United States commenced in 1825. In 1821 Kleng Pedersen visited this country with a view of finding for himself and other Quaker friends an asylum of perfect religious toleration. On his return to Norway he impressed his friends and acquaintances with the idea that it would be a good thing for them to establish a colony on American soil. Fifty-two persons from the city of Stavanger and some neighboring towns bought a small sloop and set sail on the 4th of July, 1825. On the 9th of October they entered the harbor of New York, and soon after effected a settlement near Rochester, N. Y. A short time after a new colony was formed in the Far West, in Lasalle Co., Ills. This "Fox River settlement" may be said to be the mother

colony of all the numerous Norwegian settlements throughout the Northwest.

According to the Icelandic Sagas and other historical documents, there must have been a colony of the Northmen established in some part of continental America as early as 1007. In 875 Ingulf took possession of Iceland, which had been partially settled by Christian monks and colonists from Ireland and Scotland. The Northmen were as yet heathen, and were everywhere greatly feared on account of their taste for plundering and ravages. For this reason the Christian settlers now went back to their former homes and the island became one large Norwegian colony. In 985 Erik the Red went to Greenland, where two districts of settlements were formed, of which the larger, at a later date, comprised 190 settlements, with a cathedral, 11 churches, and 3 or 4 monasteries, while the smaller one consisted of 90 settlements, with 4 churches.

In 999 Leif, the Son of Erik, embraced Christianity on a visit to Norway, and brought the first Christian priests to Greenland. The year following he started out with thirty-five men on an exploring expedition to the west and south of Greenland. At a place which he called Vinland, on account of the wild grapes found there, he built huts for the winter. For a number of years different efforts at colonization were made, and as late as 1121 Bishop Erik Upsi, from Greenland, visited Vinland in his

official capacity and reported the results of his visitation to Rome.

It thus appears likely that the first Christian colony in America of which we have any reasonably reliable report was that of these Christianized Northmen or Vikings. And it is a somewhat singular coincidence that the much larger and more important immigration of Norwegians during the present century had its beginning in an undertaking which in no small degree resembles the Viking rovings.

Comparing the history of the Norwegian Lutherans in America with that of other nationalities, one may feel tempted to trace back not a few of their churchly characteristics to the peculiar type of their ancestral blood. Towering above all else in this respect is the indomitable spirit of personal liberty and independence that makes itself felt in every sphere and in all directions—evil as well as good. Not unfrequently this ideal of freedom, it is to be regretted, assumes the character of stubborn self-will and everlasting unrest over against customs, laws and compacts that have a right to be respected and to be protected against vandalism. An unpretending index finger pointing back to Viking times and manners may thus serve as a somewhat excusable form of introduction to the theme proposed.

"The United Norwegian Lutheran Church" was finally organized in 1890, and, as its name implies,

was an outgrowth of efforts at union between previously independent groups. Four such took part in the preliminary steps, 1888–1890, but only three of them consummated the union. These were the so-called Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, the Conference, and the Norwegian Augustana Synod. The fourth was Hauge's Synod, which preferred to stand aloof.

As all Norwegian Lutherans have come from the same state church, it may seem strange that there should exist so much disunion among them. But not all in the state church of Norway were of one mind, and it is this difference of tendencies to which both the earlier and later dissensions chiefly must be traced. Elling Eielsen, a zealous adherent of Hans Nilsen Hauge, the great lay-preacher of Norway, came over in 1839 and carried on an extensive missionary operation in the new settlements. He was opposed to the state church, its ministers, customs and ceremonies. Soon groups of individuals gathered around him wherever he came, and these were formed into congregations. In 1843 he was ordained by Rev. F. A. Hoffman in Chicago. In 1846 a kind of constitution was adopted, which served the local churches as a bond of union, both in their separate capacity and in their relation to each other, until in 1875 the organization, if such it may be termed, formed itself into the "Hauge's Synod" and adopted a new constitution. But time and again discord

arose, most of it, as it appears, on account of the radical standpoint and self-will of their leader, Elling Eielsen. Some entered into connection with the Northern Illinois Synod and, in 1860, in fellowship with the Swedish members, formed the Scandinavian Augustana Synod; but in 1870 started the Norwegian branch, which, however, soon again divided into two bodies, the Augustana Synod and the Conference. Eielsen himself, after the reconstruction of his rather informal organization into the "Hauge's Synod," left that body and formed one of his own, so that there were now four distinct bodies that traced their origin to his pioneer labors. One more branch of the same origin was also for a time independent, under the leadership of Rev. P. A. Rasmussen, but united (virtually) in 1862 with the "Norwegian Synod."

This body was formed in 1853 by seven ministers, serving twenty-eight congregations that wished to adhere more closely to the ways of their mother state church. Greater stress was laid on Lutheran doctrine and churchly usages. Some of the first of these ministers were, no doubt, tainted to some degree with Grundtvig's views, but the Synod, as such, appears to have opposed that tendency—notably the doctrine of a possibility of conversion after death—from its very beginning. Since 1857 the leaders of the Norwegian Synod came into more or less close connection with the German Missouri Synod, and it is this circumstance that has largely shaped the trend of later occurrences.

When, in 1886, the Norwegian Synod resolved that the opponents of the so-called Missourian doctrine of conversion and election should not be permitted to have their own private seminary (established at Northfield, Minn.), a majority of ministers and congregations belonging to this opposition dissolved their connection with Synod and formed a kind of free union. They did not wish to establish an organized body of their own, but rather desired to bring about a union, if possible, between synods already existing. For a number of years free conferences had been annually held, and the older points of disagreement, particularly those concerning absolution and justification, had been extensively discussed, until an essential agreement was reached on all vital points. In 1887 the "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood" resolved to make an effort in the direction of organized union between itself and three other bodies. With a few exceptions, this plan of union was everywhere received with enthusiasm; and after the necessary actions of the several bodies, three of them united in June, 1890, on the basis of settlement and stipulations proposed by previous joint meetings at Eau Claire and Scandinavia. Since then a number of the old Conference have left again and started a new connection—the "Free Church"—with Augsburg Seminary as its centre and opposition to "the old church order" as its motto.

The confessional standpoint of the United Church is the same as that of the state church of Norway, viz.: 1. The three ancient ecumenical symbols: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian symbol; 2. The (unaltered) Augsburg Confession; 3. Luther's Smaller Catechism. The Augustana Synod and some congregations previously belonging to the Rasmussen faction had indeed adopted the entire Book of Concord, but the great majority of ministers and laymen were acquainted only with the symbols mentioned, and wished to confine to them the obligation of orthodox teaching, just as their mother church in Norway had all along been doing. It must be admitted, too, that the adoption of the entire Book of Concord by congregations that have never seriously examined them is hardly a confession of truth as it should be. It may be well enough to say that as a matter of fact the system of doctrine contained in the later and larger symbols is no more than a logical development and defense of the confession of faith as found in the smaller compass, especially in the Augsburg Confession as the MAGNA CHARTA of our Lutheran Church and the ecumenical symbol within our ecclesiastical borders. We have no objection to make against them on that score. If questions should arise as to the exact meaning of some proposition in the Augsburg Confession, we would, no doubt, be inclined to look for an explanation of the doubtful point in the later symbols,

and we have no conscious inclination to understanding the older symbols in a manner opposed to the more extended declarations of any specific doctrine contained in the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Larger Catechism, or even the Formula of Concord. But the volume of the entire Book of Concord is so large, and quite a number of the dogmatical and polemical points so largely require special study and acumen, that a reception of them as general symbols by lay members of our Church hardly answers to the genuine principle of confessing the faith that is in the heart. It may be well enough to require of professional theologians that they shall have examined these further expositions of our Lutheran system and approve of them as such. But it is hardly the right thing to do, either to require of laymen that they shall actually study the whole Book of Concord in order to make an intelligent and conscientious profession of their Lutheran faith, or to require of them that they shall make a profession as to the soundness of the doctrine contained in writings which they have never examined themselves, but only have, as it were, a second-hand, traditional knowledge of their contents and correctness. In the state churches, where ecclesiastical matters were officially decided by consistories or ministeriums, it may not have been felt as a difficult matter to adopt the entire volume of the Book of Concord. But in a free church, where the laity

and the local congregation is more apt to form the basis of operations, the matter becomes more questionable, to say the least. And it must be confessed that an honest, direct and positive subscription to a smaller range of confessional standards is found to be entirely sufficient for our lay members.

We need, of course, a confession of some kind as a basis of church-union and harmonious co-operation. And as God himself, we take it for granted, has had His governing hand in the great events of New Testament church history just as directly and officially as he ever had in the development of Old Testament history, we are in no doubt of any kind that the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century was the work of the great Head of the Church. We know full well that the adherents of popery will not admit this, but claim that Luther's opposition to Rome was only a sectarian rebellion against divinely-constituted church authority. But as Christians we make the counter-claim, that all doctrines and usages must be tested by the unquestionably divine standard of the canonical Scriptures. Even Romanists themselves, being called upon to testify, cannot deny that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the supreme God-given standard and rule of revealed truth, the higher tribunal to which they must themselves appeal, as soon as their claim concerning the official authority or infallibility of the pope at Rome is called in question and they are required to show ground for

its assumption. And as God in His own Holy Word commands us to yield absolute *obedience of faith* to his revealed Word and testimony, not to any man, even though he claim to be an apostle or an angel from heaven (Gal. i, 8), we feel perfectly at liberty to exercise the natural right of faith, which is by Romanists condemned as rebellious "private judgment." The testimony and confession of either private Christians or official members of the Church in all its forms has no dictatorial authority of its own or independently of the canonical consensus of the prophets and apostles. Hence, where our faith and conscience is necessitated to make its choice between the clear doctrine of the Gospel of Christ on the one hand, and the decisions of popes, councils, bishops or any official church authority whatever on the other hand, we will not, as Erasmus did, and as all good papists must do as a matter of principle, subordinate our conviction of the truth to any such ecclesiastical authority. We will rather obey the admonitions of Scripture and follow the good example of Luther at Worms, when he declared before the assembled dignitaries of Church and State: "Unless it be that I am proved to be in error, by testimony from Holy Writ or by clear and overpowering reasons (for I base my faith neither upon what the pope nor what the councils alone have said, since it is evident and manifest that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am constrained, by the pass-

ages which I have adduced, my conscience being bound by God's Word, and, therefore, I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience. Here I stand, I cannot act otherwise, so help me God. Amen."

Applying this evangelical principle of Protestantism to our own case, we do not regard our Lutheran Church as any traditional authority to determine for us what we should receive as the faith once delivered to the saints, but we do make the confession of our Church our own personal confession, because we are convinced that the system of doctrine laid down in it is the same as that of the Scriptures, whilst that of other denominations, in so far as they deviate from it, at the same time deviate from certain elementary or fundamental principles of the Christian religion. We do not say: "We wish to be regarded as good Lutherans and hence we feel it as our duty to stand up for our Lutheran doctrine;" but we rather say: "First the truth for its own sake, and then the Church as a pure and faithful witness of the truth." There is a possibility, and to some degree a practice, of making too much of our own Church or even our own synod. Our divisions have no doubt one of their causes in that common weakness of human nature which in so many ways creates a partisan spirit and makes hobbies of even the greatest truths and blessings.

Rejecting all manner of dictatorial church authority, and appealing to the Holy Scriptures on the basis of our Christian right of "private judgment" in the sense of conscientious obedience of faith, we are Protestants. We protest against all arbitrary authority and recognize no other tribunal than the word of God. And yet we differ greatly from many claiming to be Protestants by preëminence. We agree with them in discountenancing the claims of popery, but we disagree with them in regard to the method of reading the Scriptures and accepting its doctrines in certain vital points.

The Lutheran Reformation is by no means exclusively opposition to Rome. It is just as much opposition to the authority of human reason and pretended independent spirituality. The principle of obedience of faith to be observed by the disciples of Jesus is not only one of negative force over against human devices of an ecclesiastical character, but it is of a very positive character, and demands submission of our minds and hearts to all the teachings of Scripture.

There is a sphere of gospel doctrines that form, so to speak, a border-land between the strictly natural and the exclusively supernatural domains. The human nature of our Saviour, for instance, most assuredly in many respects belongs to our lower region,—our simply physical and common-sense domain. But when the man Jesus, the Son of Mary, walks on the water, rises from the dead,

appears to His disciples when the doors were closed, ascends into heaven before the eyes of his witnesses, raises Lazarus and others from the dead with his commanding voice, etc., we cannot explain these phenomena on the basis of ordinary human physiology. They belong to a different sphere, and are manifestations of conditions and laws of a superior kind,—of a supernatural character.

In like manner, the means of grace strictly so-called, the Word of God, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are institutions that partake of a double character. On the one hand, they consist of elements and actions exactly adapted to our senses and mental conditions. But on the other hand, they are endowed with decidedly supernatural contents and efficacy, if at any rate the explicit testimony of Holy Writ concerning them is to be relied upon, as we most assuredly know that it is.

Holy baptism, therefore, is not to be simply classed with common washings with water, as though it could at most be no more than a figurative, emblematical, symbolical representation only of certain spiritual truths or effects. It is an institution belonging to the higher domain of the kingdom of heaven and forms one of its "mysteries." All merely natural washings have their natural effects, and may in these be taken to symbolize effects of a higher sphere. But holy baptism is, by Scripture, in many texts and ways

spoken of as having a spiritual, supernatural character and efficacy in virtue of its being one of the "mysteries of God" for the salvation of sinners (1 Cor. iv. 1).

As the gospel of Jesus Christ, in its gracious promises, offers and presents to sinners the fruits of Christ's redemption for their acceptance by faith, so also holy baptism is the great covenant promise of the triune God, the warranty deed, as it were, by which our reconciled Father, on his part, makes a grant to us of the blessings procured for us through the blood of the Lamb of God. And as the Gospel, in all its promises and truths, is an instrument used by the Spirit of God to convey and impart supernatural, spiritual, heavenly benefits and blessings, so also holy baptism is not devoid of the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost. To reduce the efficacy, object and aim of baptism to a merely figurative representation amounts in fact to a denial of its being a means of grace in any higher sense than all other every-day washings with water may be taken to be. The serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness had in it the supernatural power of healing by means of the promise annexed to it and raising its efficacy to a higher, a supernatural level. Thus it is also the direct and positive promise of grace and salvation for Christ's sake that renders baptism a washing for the forgiveness of sins and a covenant act of God, in which life and salvation are freely offered to all

and are communicated to those who truly repent and believingly appropriate the promised merit of the Saviour.

The mistake made by so many Protestants in measuring the "mysteries of God" by the standards only of our lower, merely physical sphere is especially apparent in their doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper. They view the bread and wine as merely symbols of the body and blood of Christ, because, forsooth, real bread and wine naturally cannot claim to be more than such symbols. But the institution of the Lord's Supper places it clearly in the higher sphere of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." And being thus placed in that sphere, it is not even very rational to judge of its essence and object merely by our experimental common-sense knowledge of bread and wine in our lower, exclusively physical sphere.

It is the Saviour Himself who alone is able to tell us for what purpose He has instituted the eating of bread and the drinking of wine in the Holy Sacrament. Time and again He made ample use of parables, representing the things of the kingdom of God by means of images taken from our lower natural domain. Then He always says: "The kingdom of heaven is *likened unto*, or is *like to*," this or that. He knew very well what form of language to use when He was presenting spiritual facts and truths in a merely figurative or symbolical manner. But in His words of institution He did not

say: Take, eat this bread which is like my body given for you; or, Drink of this wine which is like my blood shed for the remission of sins. His words are direct and positive: "Take, eat, this is my body; take, drink, this is my blood." The acts of eating and drinking are in plain terms referred by Him to His own body and blood. And it is this specific sacramental act of eating His body and drinking His blood which is to take place in remembrance of Him as our dying Redeemer, who has made a sacrifice of His own body and blood for our salvation.

If thoughts of reason here object: How can the body and blood of Jesus be invisibly and insensibly present in so many places, etc.? we simply answer: The possibilities and realities of any mystery of God, and particularly of the human nature of the God-man, are never to be measured by the laws and conditions of our lower physical sphere, but by their own higher laws of their higher domain, in accordance with the majesty of His will and almighty power, who has established this kingdom of heaven and has given it its own supernatural and heavenly character. What we are to believe, teach and confess regarding each of these mysteries of God, He has given us to know by His Holy Word, and He requires us to accept of this positive and clear Word as the authentic standard and rule of our *faith*, fully convinced that "*what he has promised, he is also able to perform*," even though all

the known or unknown laws of the lower natural sphere should be at an absolute loss to account for the possibility of His promise being fulfilled. To define the essence of the Lord's Supper is, from a truly Christian standpoint, clearly not a business of experimental common sense, taking its rules of decision exclusively from the lower sphere of physical nature. You might as well deny all miracles, all articles of faith, all interventions of divine providence, merely because the constitution of physical nature does not reveal any manner in which provision is made for such extraordinary occurrences.

It was on account of this radical principle of unbelief over against the mystery of the Eucharist, as revealed in the words of its institution, that Dr. Luther so strenuously opposed the rationalizing tendency of Carlstadt and Zwingli. And all later developments of that sort of theology, down to our own day of liberal theologies and of materialistic infidelity and atheism, have by no means proven Luther's standpoint to be wrong. Once open the flood-gates of rationalistic doubt and unbelief respecting some clear word of God as such, and you need not wonder if a deluge of infidel rationalism and naturalism sweeps away every remnant of faith in the supernatural character of anything and everything in our Christian religion.

It is poor theology, indeed, to say, when the mystery of the Holy Trinity is called in question:

"You must judge of this mystery and article of faith by the standard of the clearly revealed word of God, not by that of the gainsayings of corrupt reason," and then again, when the mystery of the holy Eucharist is treated of, to say: "This mystery of God is to be defined and explained in accordance with the common-sense ideas that govern this lower sphere of our experimental physical knowledge, not by the positive and plain tenor of the words of institution as any binding standard of faith in regard to this sacrament." Our Saviour knew what He was doing when He made His careful choice of explicit terms. And we do not see how we could claim to be His true and faithful disciples if we should refuse to accept of His plain, straightforward words, merely because we see no natural law to sustain them.

> "Christ was the Word that spake it,
> He took the bread and brake it;
> And as that Word did make it,
> So I believe and take it."

This position of yielding absolute obedience of faith to the plain texts of Scripture affects the entire sphere of the means of grace, and in fact all articles of faith. In the gospel household it is God who deals with us through certain persons and means. It has pleased the triune God to be present in this temple of His grace and to make known His will in the doctrines of the law and the gospel.

He has Himself made provision for us to find Him, and it is for us to seek Him in the manner in which He is willing to be found. For this reason we also believe, as the gospel texts (Matt. xvi. 19; John xx. 23) teach us to do, that the forgiveness of sins announced in the name of God is a valid declaration of God's forgiving grace. It is in every case a gracious promise of God *offering* for Christ's sake to forgive sin, and revealing God's heart as ready to impart full forgiveness on account of that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins. If the forgiveness thus promised and offered in absolution is accepted with a penitent and believing heart, then such absolution actually *confers* the comfort and blessing of forgiveness as a means of personal justification, just as gospel promises in general do confer their blessings to those who receive them believingly. If, however, the pastoral absolution should be spoken to an unrepentant and unbelieving person, it still remains an offer of pardon as a free gift and valid declaration of God's universal forgiving love for Christ's sake, although the person receiving the absolution in such a case hinders it, by his impenitence, from becoming more to him than a mere offer or promise of forgiveness on the part of God.

It may be urged, with truth and justice, that the doctrinal position here delineated is common to all Lutherans, and hence cannot serve as a distinguishing characteristic of any particular Lutheran

body. Our reply is, that we heartily desire, as much as lieth in us, to rest content with this ecumenical Lutheran position and to avoid setting forth special characteristics regarding doctrines or usages with a view of separating our United Church on the ground of such differences from other (Norwegian) Lutheran bodies. There are, no doubt, quite a number of doctrinal and other differences between Lutheran synods, forming, as it were, a handy dividing wall between partisan leaders and their followers on both sides of the dividing lines. But the extremely serious question is: "Does our Father in heaven approve of such a condition of things? Are all these minor details of differences really of such a weighty character that a separate organization for purposes of confession and harmonious church work must be taken to be at least warranted, if not actually necessitated?" Our Lutheran Church in America presents a rather quilt-like appearance, not only on the ground of different languages and nationalities, nor merely by reason of different historic development, but also in large degree on account of certain morbid predilections regarding sundry subordinate questions of doctrine or of polity. Perhaps it is not out of the way, too, to mention a certain traditional partisan spirit as making itself felt here and there, in a deplorable degree, by making hobbies of trivial matters.

Why should not Lutheran Christians be able to

walk together in peace and harmony, instead of being split up in endless divisions? We of the United Church have had an experience of our own in this matter and have drawn a number of practical conclusions from such experience. Laying stress continually on the points of our previous differences, and trying to make them appear as large and as weighty as possible, did not bring us closer together. But taking the matter coolly and trying to solve the disputed questions on the basis of our common doctrinal grounds, this is what has helped us immensely to see sundry things in a clearer light and to come closer together.

If our Church is to remain true to its calling, and if it is to occupy its proper position in this new world, it must learn better to make a proper distinction between those matters that necessitate, or at least warrant, division into separate organized bodies, and again such matters as do not justify such separate organizations, either of congregations or of synods. This is a very, very weak point in our present ecclesiastical situation. It will not answer the purpose here to say that if any teaching of Scripture forms a point of difference between congregations or synods, then their separate existence and their practical opposition to each other is thereby fully justified. A distinction must unquestionably be made between fundamental doctrines—all those "articles of faith" belonging to the essence of Gospel teaching—and all such non-

fundamental questions, by which the unity of faith is not vitally affected. In regard to the latter, much weakness of judgment must be tolerated with cheerful patience, without, however, yielding a hair's breadth respecting the truth itself. The authority of Scripture as our absolute rule of faith must remain absolutely unchallenged. Surely, if all our Lutheran Church bodies were to form an agreement among themselves that they will assist each other in various ways to understand more clearly, and to appreciate more fully, the glory of our Church in regard to its general distinctive characteristics of gospel purity, and thus to indoctrinate all our people more thoroughly as to the primary great principles of our Lutheran faith in its various bearings, then, we trust, but not till then, will the way to greater harmony and closer union have been paved in a manner perfectly pleasing to God and sure to enjoy his paternal blessing. There would, no doubt, remain differences of various kinds and degrees, but hardly any that would necessitate or warrant a continuation of our variegated organizations, with all their small rivalries and other blemishes. "Where there is a will, there is a way," is a saying that most assuredly holds good in all cases where "a will" is in earnest conformity with God's will. And our Lutheran theologians have long since laid down the sound principle that the unity of the Church does not at all imply an absolute unity in regard to all questions

of doctrine, or morals, or church history, or pastoral practice that can be ultimately decided by appealing to the Scriptures. A general study of this special chapter of our Lutheran theology would, no doubt, be of great help to arrive at a more clear understanding of the matter, and would in many (well-meant but mistaken) cases lead to an adoption of sounder principles.

What has been previously said contains a sufficient outline of our characteristics as a United Church. Differences of various kinds we desire to reduce, if possible, to a God-pleasing minimum, so far as their use as a basis for separate organization is concerned. We desire in this respect to follow the example of the ancient Church, and even our Lutheran Church in the days of its historic greatness. Both of them have tolerated differences of a non-fundamental character. Absolute unity, it is true, is desirable enough as an ideal, but hardly ever attainable in this world; and the question really may be, whether it does not belong to the normal calling of the Church here below to practice patience and forbearance in different ways, if but all the essential points of absolutely necessary unity remain intact?

"Hauge's Synod" and its smaller offshoot—calling itself officially "The Evangelical Lutheran Church"—would probably be received into our body without asking many questions as to doctrine. There is no point that has been to any degree controverted between us and them.

The "Free Church," however, is formed on an entirely new basis. They regard the close connection between college and seminary education in the same institution as a vital matter of welfare for the Church. They furthermore reject the principle of representation as a basis of full membership at their annual meetings, granting the right to vote to all individual members of any Lutheran connection, provided they approve of their "rules." They claim, also, that congregations thus enjoy greater liberty and are better cared for in regard to their spiritual wants.

Over against "The Synod for the Norwegian Lutheran Church" our relations are of a somewhat strained kind. Of late there has been more or less endeavor to come to a better understanding, but thus far without any visible success. Our United Church, during its eleven years of existence, has not taken any official position on controverted points, partly because the growing expansion has taken up almost all of our time for so-called business matters, partly because the troubles with the "Free Church" element have encroached largely on our transactions, partly also because there has been engendered a certain aversion in our midst to all discussions of a strictly dogmatical or polemical character, and herein, no doubt, lies a by no means insignificant danger of our position.

But although the United Church as such has not formally declared itself on the doctrine concerning

predestination and conversion, it has, however, been set forth in the writings of leaders of the Norwegian Synod. The main point in question is not of an unessential or non-fundamental character, but seriously affects the entire order of salvation in points of vital importance.

As we understand it, the radical difference is to be sought in the question, Does man, when subject to the gospel call, retain an option, an alternative between two courses of action, and thus a choice of free accountability before God as his judge? or does the grace of God save all that are saved in an absolute manner, not only excluding all merit or worthiness on their part, but also all option or choice between different courses of conduct, as a necessary basis of free accountability?

So far as any meritorious virtue of any conduct or exercise of freedom on the part of man is concerned, we teach that both the gracious will of God and all His gracious operations are absolute in the full sense of that term, excluding every shade or degree of merit on the part of a sinner. But we regard it as a very serious mistake to transfer this idea or principle of absoluteness to the sphere of saving efficacy, or to the relation between the grace of God as an efficient cause of salvation and its intended effects or results.

If it be said, with a view of excluding Synergism, that all converting and saving efficacy is exclusively on the side of God and His grace,

and none whatever on the side of fallen man, we answer: Most assuredly this is a plain gospel truth; but when the saving means of grace, and the saving power of the Spirit exercised through those means, are present and operating by the will of God, and are thus paving the way for a sinner's conversion and salvation, then, nevertheless, grace as a saving cause permits every man to retain an option between obeying the call and yielding to the saving influences of God's Spirit on the one hand, and between refusing to do so on the other hand. Every called sinner—ordinarily, at least—retains his free accountability in this respect. All the merit is Christ's alone, all the efficacy is the Spirit's alone, but the divinely appointed order of salvation in the case of no man annuls his free accountability or his option between two alternatives, two different possible courses of action under the efficacious gospel call. To say, however, that man has no alternative under the gracious and efficacious gospel call, no freedom of choice, no option, no free accountability, is in fact saying that any really saving grace must be absolutely efficacious, leaving no possibility whatever to the sinner of taking a contrary course of action to that which the divine grace enables and urges him to take. But this view of saving grace as being in and of itself absolutely decisive and effective is plainly the antiquated Calvinistic principle concerning the efficiency of grace, the so-called "irresistible grace,"

which tolerates no choice or alternative on the part of man to take an opposite course from the one sought to be brought about by the saving love of God.

Predestination, viewed thus as a decree of God's almighty will-power fixing the fate of a chosen number of individual sinners for their infallibly guaranteed conversion and salvation without any possibility of their frustrating His designs, is most certainly not the foundation of faith revealed in the gospel of Christ. It is a foundation aside from that revealed gospel, a special foundation claimed for elect persons only—this person, that person, nobody knows why, since all are equally lost in Adam and equally redeemed in Christ. And the oppositional character is manifested in various ways:

1. The gospel of Christ knows only of one and the same gracious will of God to save all sinners by certain appointed means and the saving power exercised through them. But the gospel of the absolutely efficacious will and saving power clearly sets up a double order of salvation, the one general and conditional, the other special and absolute. You may, of course, call the general will and the special will one and the same will, but calling it so will never make it so; the difference is too great and too plain, one of them only being really saving and always absolutely saving.

2. According to the gospel of Christ, conversion

and faith are indeed the work of the Holy Ghost, but in such a manner that the free accountability of man is not neutralized or abolished. The called sinner, when enabled to yield to the Spirit through the influences of preparing grace, is still free to do one of two things, either to thus yield or to resist. In this respect he has a free option between two alternatives. But the contrary doctrine of an absolutely efficacious gospel call claims that the result is irrevocably fixed by the almighty will-power of God, which leaves the elect person no degree of choice or option, no possibility of taking an opposite course, no free accountability as a moral-agent under God as our universal judge. (Compare Esa. v. 4; Matt. xii. 41, 42.)

3. In the gospel of Christ faith is the central, pivotal point where the fate of sinners is determined one way or the other; for he that believes, is saved; he that remains in unbelief, remains under God's wrath. But the predestinarian foundation of faith claims that faith in the Son of God actually settles nothing at all, it being only a subordinate means of executing that mysterious decree of God which, among sinners lost alike and redeemed alike, is pleased to grant absolutely guaranteed salvation to this person, to that person, but to none on account of their having received and appropriated the merit of the universal Saviour. In the gospel of Christ the infallibly saving decree of God is dependent on the fore-knowledge of faith

as a free act of man under the free grace of God—a free act, because exercised while retaining freedom of action in an opposite direction and not being limited to a fixed line of action. In the contrary doctrine faith is represented as simply an infallible result of God's almighty will-power, an absolute effect of an absolute cause, with no alternative or option left to man as a moral agent under his Judge. In judging the elect God thus can only judge Himself as the only free agent in the matter.

4. The gospel of Christ says to believers: You are now in a state of grace and salvation; you are also, by the grace of God, fully enabled to retain your position and to press forward towards the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls in heaven; but you must make use of the proper means and continually renew your purpose of faith and obedience, for you may actually fall from grace, lose your present good estate and thus be deprived of your crown. The opposite doctrine says: God has revealed to the specially elected persons his infallible decree concerning their final salvation, so that they can and should be sure beforehand that no falling away from faith or grace ever can ultimately injure them, for in virtue of God's infallibly guaranteed salvation they must necessarily be finally saved.

SUPPLEMENT TO DR. SCHMIDT'S ARTICLE.

BY REV. JENS C. ROSELAND,
General Secretary of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church.

From its very inception one of the emphasized and reiterated purposes of the United Church is the reuniting of the half dozen Norwegian Lutheran Synods, which, for more or less real doctrinal differences, have drifted apart, and have established independent synodical activities, such as schools, missions, etc. It might seem a little strange that a people of so decided a religious bias, and of such uniform religious training, should so easily drift apart where political conditions accorded them a larger freedom of conscience. And yet, underneath the apparent inconsistency there is a logic which strongly suggests the inevitableness of a chapter of divisions to cover the first generation or two in Norwegian American Church History.

The Norwegian churchman, who came to this country, found himself confronted by conditions which left him absolutely free to follow strictly in the wake of the old Norwegian State Church, or to try a less ritualistic and more pietistic form of Lutheranism. It was but natural that the tendencies of Orthodoxism and Haugean Pietism, which had already divided the Norwegian immigrants before they left their fatherland, should take the form of

independent outward organizations, under conditions which invited such a course. The chapter of Norwegian Lutheran divisions in this country is, therefore, nothing strange to one at all familiar with Norwegian history.

Nor is it any more strange that after a generation of more or less successful dabbling in independent free-church experiments, this uniformly religiously trained people should manifest a *deep disappointment* with the outward results of this ultra-exclusivism, and earnestly begin to think of reuniting what so naturally belonged together.

It is this logical Union Movement among Norwegian Lutherans in America we would trace in these lines in the form of a supplement to Dr. Schmidt's article, beginning with the year 1900.

During the synodical year 1899 to 1900 the Union Movement gained no appreciable headway, inasmuch as only the United Church had appointed a Union Committee. At the June conventions in 1900, the Eastern and Iowa Districts of the Norwegian Synod adopted resolutions recommending that, to begin with, the Presidents and Theological Faculties of the Norwegian Synod, the Hauge's Synod and the United Church meet together and thoroughly discuss their doctrinal differences. The United Church convention of the same year elected a committee to arrange for a general "Free Conference" of all the Norwegian Lutheran Church

bodies, and to this committee it also referred the recommendation of the Norwegian Synod. March 28-30 the following year a Colloquium was held, as recommended by the Norwegian Synod, and it was decided to hold a similar Colloquium the next year, but owing to the prolonged sickness and death of the President of the United Church, the Rev. G. Hoime, which occurred June 9th, 1902, no Colloquium was held that year. In 1903 the "Church Council (Kirkeraadet) of the Norwegian Synod requested the President and Faculty of the United Church to elect as a member of the Colloquium some one in the place of Dr. F. A. Schmidt, as certain members of the Synod Faculty had declined, for conscience' sake, to take part in the Colloquium with him as a member. This request was not granted, and that same year a most scathing attack upon Dr. Schmidt was published by the Synodical Church Council and freely circulated among the congregations of the Synod. With regard to this action, the United Church at its convention in 1903 passed the following resolution:

"The convention declares that the Colloquium commenced between the Faculties and Presidents of the Norwegian Synod and the United Church, with a view to union, was stopped by the Church Council of the Norwegian Synod. Should the Norwegian Synod approve of the Council's action and not be willing to continue the Colloquium, the convention recommends that the accomplishment of a God-pleasing union among Norwegian Lutheran Christians in America be sought

through general 'Free Conferences.' Should the Norwegian Synod at its present convention fail to take any steps for the furtherance of the union, the United Church instructs its President to arrange, if possible, for the holding of general 'Free Conferences' among the Norwegian Lutheran Christians in America."

In accordance with this resolution the President of the United Church conferred with the Presidents of the Norwegian Synod and the Hauge's Synod about the holding of such "Free Conferences," but without any result.

At the Albert Lea convention, in 1904, the United Church passed the following resolution:

"The convention deplores that the Norwegian Synod and the Hauge's Synod will not confer with us concerning a Christian union of the Norwegian Lutheran bodies. Notwithstanding all refusals, the United Church will, nevertheless, not withdraw the extended hand, and it hopes and prays that God graciously will lead the hearts so that the negotiations, now apparently made impossible, may be renewed in a not too distant future." (Official Minutes, 1904, p. 198.)

At the United Church convention, in 1905, a similar resolution was passed, deploring the slow progress of the Union Movement, and requesting the President and Theological Faculty to renew their efforts during the following year. In the meantime this convention received a telegram from the simultaneous Hauge's Synod convention officially announcing that it had appointed a Union Committee "to confer with other Norwegian Lutheran

Synods about union." At the Norwegian Synod convention of the same year a committee was appointed "to confer with the committee appointed by the Hauge's Synod about union." Thus it happened that a joint meeting of all these three committees was held at Minneapolis, March 27-30, 1906, at which a unanimous agreement was reached as to the doctrines of ABSOLUTION. The committees consisted of the Theological Faculties, the Presidents, and an additional member elected by each of the three Synods. A second meeting was held by this committee at Minneapolis, October 16-19, 1906, where the subject of LAY ACTIVITY in the Church was discussed and agreed upon. The doctrine concerning the CALL and CONVERSION was discussed at two meetings in 1907, and a quite lengthy statement, setting forth in detail the doctrinal position, was unanimously adopted. (See Official Minutes U. C., 1908, pp. 53-63.)

The doctrine concerning ELECTION was discussed by the Union Committees at five different meetings, as follows: November 10-13, 1908; March 30 to April 2, 1909; November 2-5, 1909; March 29, 1910, and December 13, 1910. (See official Minutes U. C., 1910, pp. 73-86.) A sub-committee, consisting of one member from each committee, was appointed to formulate and agree upon a statement of the doctrine of Election to be submitted for discussion by all the committees in joint session. The

sub-committee, however, failed to agree, and a series of theses, by Dr. Stub, the President of the Norwegian Synod, was made the basis of discussion. When it became evident that no agreement could be reached on this basis, a new sub-committee was appointed to again try to formulate some joint report for discussion, but once more with the result that the sub-committee could not agree. The committee of the Norwegian Synod, having previously declared that they would not take part in the Colloquium any longer unless the sub-committee could come to some agreement, the project seemed blocked. Yet the President of the Norwegian Synod, Dr. Stub, called another joint meeting of all the committees March 29, 1910, and at this meeting a motion was made to adopt for discussion a series of theses presented by Rev. Eastvold, of the Hauges Synod, but the Norwegian Synod committee finally concluded not to take any further part in the Colloquium until after the matter had been laid before the following annual convention of the Synod.

Again a meeting was called of the three Union Committees at the United Church Seminary, December 13-14, 1910, at which a declaration was read by Dr. Stub, and signed by the Synod Faculty, severely censuring certain utterances in Dr. Dahl's, the United Church President's, last annual report to the United Church, in which he had declared that the theses of Dr. Stub's "contained certain doctrines re-

garding Election, which the (United Church) committee could not with a good conscience subscribe to as Biblical and Lutheran doctrine." As a necessary condition for continuing these discussions with the United Church committee, the declaration therefore demanded that the un-Biblical and un-Lutheran doctrine in these Theses should be pointed out, and that they should be made the basis for discussion. Accordingly, at the forenoon session, December 14, Dr. J. N. Kildahl presented a critical review of Dr. Stub's Theses, in which he called attention to the points to which the United Church committee could not subscribe. But all the members of the Synod committee had already left the meeting, and further discussion was again blocked, so far as the Synod committee was concerned.

The two remaining committees from the United Church and the Hauge's Synod, however, continued the discussion mainly on the basis of Rev. Eastvold's Theses, the result of which was the unanimous adoption of the following resolution:

"The Union Committees of the United Church and the Hauge's Synod hereby declare, that in their judgment, there is no doctrinal difference between these two bodies, for which they should be divided, and that they, therefore, can and ought fully to recognize each other as brethren in the faith and orthodox Lutherans." The committees passed a resolution deploring that the Norwegian Synod Committee had found it right to withdraw from the union movement. (See Official Minutes U. C., 1911, pp. 91-96.)

At this time an effort was also made by the United Church to commence negotiations with a view to organic union with the so-called "Norwegian Lutheran Free Church," but in a correspondence from the Free Church committee, dated September 23, 1910, the proposition was politely evaded. (See Official Minutes of Free Church, 1911, p. 108.)

So far the union effort with the Norwegian Synod had established agreement with regard to the doctrine of Absolution, The Call, Conversion and Lay Activity, but it had stranded on the doctrine of Election.

Partly as the result of an informal Lay Delegate Meeting, held during the United Church convention at St. Paul, Minn., in 1911, both the United Church and the Norwegian Synod discharged their old Union Committees and elected new ones, several of the members of which were known to be strong union men. These new committees held a joint meeting in Madison, Wis., in February, 1912, at which certain doctrinal propositions regarding Election, styled "Opgjor" and "Forslag," were unanimously agreed upon. (See Official Minutes U. C., 1912, pp. 254-256.) These propositions were printed in pamphlet form and circulated among all the congregations of both Synods. At the following June conventions these propositions were almost unanimously adopted by both the Norwegian Synod and the United Church, and new committees

were elected to confer as to what ought to be the next step in order to secure an actual union. These committees, together with a committee from the Hauge's Synod, met at Minneapolis, September 4-5, 1912. But little, however, was accomplished by this meeting, owing to the fact that the Norwegian Synod committee did not regard themselves authorized to discuss the question of actual union before their Synod had passed upon the subject and given to the committee its instructions. Resolutions were adopted recommending joint Lay and Pastoral Conferences, Mission meetings and occasional exchange of pulpits, and that the congregations be requested not to precipitate the movement by hasty local unions, but that they for the present remain in formal connection with the Synod to which they at present belong. The Presidents of the three Synods were authorized to call a new meeting of the committees when necessary.

The Union Committees of the United Church and the Lutheran Free Church held a meeting in St. Paul, Minn., February 11-12, 1912, and one in Minneapolis, Minn., February 18-20, 1913, but no appreciable progress was made towards union, inasmuch as the Free Church Committee declared that in order to secure a more cordial relation and co-operation between these two bodies, the inevitable condition would be an acknowledgment on the part of the United Church that it had acted in an unjust

and unchristian manner in half a dozen stipulated points. This the United Church committee repudiated as an unjust demand, and refused to make such a recommendation. (See Official Minutes U. C., 1913, pp. 90-91.)

In June, 1913, an extra session of the Norwegian Synod had been called chiefly for the purpose of taking action on the question of Union. The discussion centered on the "Opgjor," and objection was made to the two parentheses in the first paragraph of this document, namely, "*The so-called first formula of doctrine* (referring to the Formula of Concord, Art. XI), and "*The so-called second formula of doctrine,*" (referring to question 548 in "Truth Unto Piety," by Dr. Pontoppidan). Dr. Stub called the attention of the United Church to this objection in a personal appeal before its annual convention, which was held simultaneously at St. Paul. He also called attention to the United Church committee's criticism of his Theses on Election, as one of the obstacles in the way of union, which it was in the power of the United Church to remove.

In answer to this appeal the United Church immediately passed a resolution to strike out the objectionable parentheses, provided the same action should be taken by the other two conferring bodies. It was also officially declared by the United Church convention that Dr. Stub's Theses had never been submitted for discussion at any United Church con-

vention, and that consequently the United Church had never expressed any opinion or criticism with regard to them.

These resolutions were formally transmitted to the Norwegian Synod convention by duly elected fraternal delegates. (See Official Minutes U. C., 1913, p. 241.)

This concession by the United Church was followed in the Norwegian Synod convention by a *Majority Report,* which enlarged the power of the Union Committee so that it might take up for discussion with the other two Union Committees the question of a possible future consolidation into one Synod, or a federation of Synods, and a *Minority Report,* which opposed this. After a long and warm debate the Majority Report prevailed, the vote standing 394 for and 106 against, less than 20 out of the 106 being laymen.

The Majority Report was sent to the congregations of the Norwegian Synod for their indorsement, and at this writing (March 1st, 1914) the returns to the President, Dr. Stub, show a most gratifying unanimity on the part of the congregations in favor of the *Majority Report.*

The last joint meeting of the three union committees was held at Minneapolis, Minn., January 21st to 23d, 1914, the result of which was the *unanimous agreement* to recommend to the next Synodical conventions the *consolidation* of the three Church

bodies. Two sub-committees were elected to report to a meeting of the Joint Committee to be held in March, 1914. One of these sub-committees is to take under advisement and recommend *conditions of union.* The second sub-committee was instructed to recommend draft for *consolidation* and *Articles of Incorporation.*

The statistical report of 1912 shows the following figures: 589 pastors and professors, 1570 congregations, 276,596 souls, 170,000 communicant members, and nearly 40,000 children attending the parochial schools. A theological seminary with 88 students, a college with 541 students, a normal school with 154 students, and 6 smaller colleges with 1221 students. In 1912 it had 17 missionaries, 34 evangelists and 18 native workers in China. And in Madagascar it had 16 missionaries, 4 native pastors and 31 evangelists. The Mission Treasurer reports receipts for the same year $172,221.54. The Synodical property amounts to nearly $2,000,000.00. A Jubilee Fund is being raised which has, at this writing, almost reached $400,000.00. It has 3 orphan homes, 3 old people's homes, a deaconess home and a half dozen hospitals. It also has a Professor Fund of over $124,000.00.

The Lutheran Free Church

By PROFESSOR JOHN O. EVJEN, PH. D.
Professor of Theology in Augsburg Seminary

MOST of the adherents of the Lutheran Free Church are Norwegian or of Norwegian ancestry. Norwegian Lutherans were in America as early as 1630. In a work of mine, now in press, "Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 1630-1674," I have written the biographies of fifty-seven Norwegian, ninety-six Danish, and thirty-four Swedish immigrants, who settled in New Netherland, mainly in New Amsterdam, between the years 1630 and 1674. A few of these joined the Dutch Reformed Church, but the vast majority adhered, at least nominally, to the creed of their native home, the Lutheran, while many formally joined the Lutheran churches in the State of New York. The first "Dutch" Lutheran church in the city of New Amsterdam, was not, as hitherto has been supposed, Dutch. It was quite cosmopolitan; it counted some Dutch members, but the majority of its members were Germans, Danes, Norwegians and Swedes. There were fully as many Germans in New York, 1630-1674, as Scandinavians. The leading layman

among the Lutherans in New Amsterdam about the year 1653 was Paulus Schrick, from Nürnberg, in Germany: and the person who was suspected by the Dutch Reformed preachers in New Amsterdam as having concealed, for a whole winter, on his farm, John Gutwasser, the first Dutch Lutheran minister in New Amsterdam, was Laurence Noorman, a Norwegian.

Aside from the Swedish churches on the Delaware, the members of which we have not taken along in the count given above, the Scandinavians in New York formed no Scandinavian Lutheran congregations in the seventeenth century. They were too few in number.

Norwegian Lutheran congregations were organized in our country after the forties of the last century, when the immigration from Norway assumed greater dimensions. The Norwegian immigrants of the forties and of the succeeding generation had received their ecclesiastical training in an exclusive state church. For the majority of them a free church meant a copy of the state church, emancipated, however, from state legislation. This implied a hierarchic, or, at the best, a quasi-hierarchic government and leadership, passive congregations, a mass church, which in the name of pure doctrine held aloof from, and even applied the confessional "damnant" to, such church bodies or local congregations as had deviated from the traditions of

the fathers. A minority of these immigrants, having felt the blessing of the Hauge's movement in Norway, went to another extreme. They did not favor organized congregations, but informal assemblies of Christians who sought to be edified by lay preachers and made room for the ordained minister only when the sacraments were to be administered.

To neither of these extremes did the immigrants belong who, being averse to exclusive orthodoxy and friendly to lay activity, on the whole represented the work of the *Bergenske Reformvenner* (a group of liberty-loving Lutherans in the western part of Norway, who advocated a return to the genuine Reformation principles of polity), and who found their way, in and after 1870, to the Norwegian-Danish Conference, organized in 1870.

Not long after its organization the Conference developed within its ranks two parties, the liberal and the conservative, or the "new school" and the "old school." The new school, whose leaders were the theological professors, Sven Oftedal and Georg Sverdrup, contended for Scriptural, congregational liberty in opposition to hierarchic or synodic government, and for giving students of theology such a training as would further the true interests of the congregation according to the teachings of the Word.

Says Professor Oftedal, in an affidavit he made in 1897:

"At the time (1873) I thus became connected with Augsburg Seminary, there existed a difference of opinion among Norwegian Lutherans respecting *church polity* and methods of theological instruction. Such difference of opinion has ever since existed among them, and contributed largely to the controversies which thereafter arose in the Conference, as will be shown in this affidavit. On the one hand were the adherents of the *'new school,'* as it is called, whose convictions *were* and *are* that *the individual congregation is 'the church,' and should act with other congregations for common purpose only,* and *reserve to itself control respecting questions pertaining to the administration of its own affairs and those also bearing upon 'purity of doctrine,'* as these words are understood among theologians. *Those entertaining these views respecting church polity* call them *'free church' ideas.* On the same side were those who believed that ministers should be trained and educated in accordance with these views, and with reference to their future calling, throughout their collegiate or preparatory course as well as during their theological course, as the same is commonly understood.

"On the other side were the adherents of what is called the *'old school,'* who opposed, to a greater or less extent, the views of the new school, and desired, as it was believed, to partially adopt or retain *certain methods of church government* prevailing in the established or state church of Norway.

"The theological professors and instructors of Augsburg Seminary, and its board of trustees now in control of the seminary, *have adhered to the new school as herein defined,* and have conducted the seminary in accordance with its view. . . ." [Italics mine.]

Since 1883 the "new school" was in the majority. In 1890 the Conference united with the Norwegian Augustana Synod and the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, forming the Norwegian United Church. On the organization of this body it was expected

that it would include Augsburg Seminary, founded in 1869, the oldest Norwegian divinity school in America. This school had been incorporated under the laws of Minnesota, and its management was in the hands of a board of trustees. When the demand came that the seminary should, according to an agreement with the Norwegian-Danish Conference, be transferred to the United Norwegian Church in such a manner as to enable that church to control it entirely, it became evident to some that material changes were intended in the plan of the school, and on this account the board of trustees refused to transfer, unconditionally, the property and management of the seminary to the United Church.

The position taken by the trustees of the seminary was due to differences of another sort than those involving mere rights of property. Prof. Adolph Spaeth diagnosed the differences correctly, in stating in the *Herzog-Hauck Realencyclopädie,* XIV., p. 204, that the United Church did not approve of the view which Augsburg Seminary had in regard to the *requirements of a theological education,* in regard to *the ministry, the congregation* and *the church.* For further information see my article, "Georg Sverdrup," in the same *Realencyclopädie,* XXIV., pp. 537-555.

These differences resulted in a sharp disagreement and the withdrawal, and in some cases expulsion from the United Church of certain churches

and ministers because of their support of the position taken by the trustees of the seminary.

The members, lay and clerical, of the churches which had withdrawn or had been expelled were known, 1893-1897, as the Friends of Augsburg. They had no other organization than a voluntary meeting. Nevertheless they carried on the work of an organized Synod, having their divinity school, home and foreign missions, deaconess institute, orphans' home, and publishing business.

In 1897 they adopted the name of the "Lutheran Free Church," but continued along essentially the same lines. The congregations subscribing to the principles of the Lutheran Free Church are entirely free and independent of one another and of common organization. The work conducted by the Free Church is in the hands of independent boards, which, as far as possible, act in accordance with the consensus of opinion expressed by the annual meeting. Any member of a Lutheran congregation can become a member of this meeting by subscribing to the principles of the Lutheran Free Church and promising to support it in its object. The boards seek financial support through voluntary contributions from congregations and individuals, wherever they can enlist sympathy.

Church includes (1) Augsburg Seminary, Minneap-

Church includes (1) Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis, Minn. It has three departments, the prepara-

tory (four years), the classical (four years), the theological (three years). It has four theological professors, who also give some instruction in the college, six college professors and a number of other instructors. (2) Bethany College, Everett, Wash., organized in 1904. It has six professors. (3) Oak Grove Lutheran Ladies' Seminary, Fargo, N. D., organized in 1906. It has four professors. In 1913 the number of students in Augsburg Seminary was 160; in Oak Grove Lutheran Ladies' Seminary, 99; in Bethany College, 40.

The Home Missionary work of the Lutheran Free Church is carried on by the Board of Home Missions (since 1893). It supplies about 100 churches. The contributions for this work, in the current fiscal year, are estimated at $11,000.00.

The Foreign Missionary work is under the care of the Lutheran Board of Missions, incorporated in 1899, and is carried on in Madagascar. It has decided to conduct missionary work in China also. It reports 16 missionaries and 75 native helpers, occupying 3 stations and 30 outstations; 3 main churches with 1200 members; 1 hospital, treating 8500 patients annually; and an orphanage with 45 inmates. The property value is estimated at $10,000.00, and the total amount contributed for the last fiscal year was about $14,000.00.

The adherents of the Free Church support (1) the Norwegian Deaconess Hospital (founded 1889),

Minneapolis, Minn. It has property valued at $120,000.00. (2) Grand Forks Deaconess Hospital (1899), Grand Forks, N. D. Its property is valued at $50.000.00. (3) Bethesda Homes (orphanage), Willmar, Minn. Its property is valued at $50,000.00. (4) Martha Marie Orphans' Home (founded 1891), Poulsbo, Wash. Its property is valued at $20,000.00. The amount contributed for the maintenance of the two orphanages, in the last fiscal year, was $14,400.00.

Those who can be designated as adherents of the principles of the Lutheran Free Church and contributors to its activities are about 30,000 communicants. They support, besides the work mentioned above, 136 pastors, who serve 380 congregations and preach at 110 stations where no congregations as yet have been organized. They have about 290 church buildings, conduct 255 Sunday schools, 270 day schools for religious instruction. The church property, including 70 parsonages, is valued at $1,220,000.00, against which there appears an indebtedness of $66,180.00, only five and a half percent of the total value.

In *doctrine* the Lutheran Free Church recognizes the Bible as the one perfect divine revelation for the salvation of man, and the absolute rule for Christian faith, doctrine and life. It adheres to the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Smaller Catechism, as agreeing with the Scriptures. It considers practical

Christian experience an absolutely necessary qualification for church membership, and especially for ministers and teachers.

In *polity* the church emphasizes the independence and liberty of the individual congregation, but does not attempt a solid and final organization, lest strict limits should hinder the movement the church represents. Its principles of polity and rules for work are seen in the *Guiding Principles and Rules of the Lutheran Free Church,* which are the following:

A. Guiding Principles

1. The congregation is, according to the Word of God, the right form of the kingdom of God on earth.

2. The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed in the Word of God, seek their own and their fellow-men's salvation and eternal blessing.

3. The congregation needs, according to the New Testament, an external organization with register of its members, election of officers, stated times and places for its meetings, etc.

4. As not all members belonging to the external organization of the congregation always are believers, and as such hypocrites often falsely seek consolation in the external relation with the congregation, it is the sacred task of the congregation to purify itself by a quickening preaching of the Word

of God, by earnest exhortation and admonition, and by exclusion of manifest and perverse sinners.

5. The congregation governs its own affairs under the authority of the Word of God and the Spirit, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government as a higher tribunal.

6. The free congregation esteems and cherishes all the spiritual gifts which the Lord gives it for its spiritual upbuilding, and endeavors to quicken the gifts and further the use of them.

7. The free congregation gladly accepts the mutual help which congregations can give each other in the labor for promoting the kingdom of God.

8. Such mutual help consists partly therein, that the spiritual forces of one congregation render aid to the other by free conferences, mutual visits, laymen's activities, etc.; partly therein, that the congregations, voluntarily and in accord with the prompting of the Spirit of God, co-operate in solving such problems as are beyond the ability of the individual congregation.

9. Among such objects can be specifically mentioned: the Theological Seminary, the distribution of Bibles and of other books and papers, Inner Missions, Foreign Missions, Missions among the Jews, Deaconess Institutes, Orphanages and other works of charity.

10. Free congregations have no right to demand

that other congregations shall subject themselves to their opinion, will, judgment or decision; for which reason every dominion of a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected.

11. The joint-agencies, which might be found to be desirable for the co-operation of congregations—such as greater or lesser meetings, committees, officers, etc.,—cannot, in a Lutheran free church, impose on the individual congregation any duty, obligation, restriction or burden, but is only entitled to present motions and requests to congregations and individuals.

12. Every free congregation, as every individual believer, is actuated by the Spirit of God, and invested with the right of love, to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and the awakening of spiritual life, as far as its ability and strength reaches; in such a free, spiritual activity, the congregation is not circumscribed by parochial limits or synodical boundaries.

B. Revised Rules for Work

1 The name of this society is The Lutheran Free Church.

2. Its object is to work toward making all Norwegian Lutheran congregations living and free congregations, so that they, according to their call and their ability, can work in spiritual independence and liberty for the cause of the kingdom of God, at

home and abroad, through such organs (agencies) and institutions as the congregations themselves might determine.

3. This object it endeavors to realize by training men and women for spiritual work in and for the congregation, by holding larger or lesser meetings, by circulating serviceable literature, by organizing free-church committees and societies, by sending out itinerant preachers, and by using such other means as answer to the needs of the times.

4. The Free Church consists of congregations *

* The phrase, "consists of congregations," is rather misleading. It should be interpreted in the light of such statements as are found, *e. g.*, in E. W. Hiscox's "New Directory of Baptist Churches," pp. 332-335, which work in connection with R. W. Dale's "Manual of Congregational Principles" (London, 1902), will aid the reader in appreciating "Guiding Principles," as embodying Scriptural principles of polity. However, the phrase may stand if it be borne in mind how it is used in the statement: "The entire Lutheran Church consists of Lutheran congregations." "Consists," as used in this sentence, does not imply a politico-ecclesiastic organization, or the accountability of a local congregation to any other congregation or any combination of congregations. The congregation as the body of Christ is subject to other laws than those of a commonwealth or those sanctioned by traditional "Kirchenrecht."

As to the prospects for the Free Church entering into "organic" union with a Synod, such a union would be an impossibility, according to Prof. Sverdrup, the author of "Guiding Principles" (*Folkebladet,* November 22d, 1905). He says: "The Free Church consists, as is well known, of an annual meeting, open to all Lutheran Christians, regardless of

which, in their constitution, unreservedly subscribe to the ancient ecumenical symbols, Luther's Small Catechism and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and which, by resolution, acknowledge the Principles and Rules of the Free Church, and make a report thereof to the Secretary, regardless of other synodical affiliation.

5. The Free Church holds an annual meeting, which, as a rule, begins the second Wednesday of the month of June; elects the necessary committees, itinerant preachers and officers; and determines what church activities the meeting will especially recommend to the congregations.

6. The right to vote in the meetings of the Free Church is possessed by all voting church members who come from the congregations which constitute the Free Church; the right to vote is also possessed by voting members of other Lutheran congregations

Synodic affiliation, who will work for free and living congregations. With this annual meeting a Synod cannot unite." Co-operation is, of course, possible.

When the Free Church Committee, in 1913, declared that in order to secure a more cordial relation between the United Church and the Free Church, the inevitable condition would be an acknowledgment on the part of the United Church that it had "sinned" against the Free Church and should "repent"—the Free Church Committee disregarded the spirit of "Guiding Principles" and the teachings of Prof. Sverdrup, who had Scriptural views on the question as to whether the congregations of a Synod are responsible for the actions of the Synod. (*Folkebladet,* February 24th, 1897.)

who, by sending in to the Secretary special blanks which they have signed, make known that they acknowledge the Principles and Rules of the Free Church and will work for the object stated in paragraph 2.

7. The officers of the Free Church shall be a President, a Vice-President and a Secretary. They shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve for one year. The President presides at the annual meeting, the Secretary keeps the minutes of the annual meeting; these two officers jointly publish the annual report of the Free Church and decide the time and place for the annual meeting, if the previous annual meeting did not decide this matter; they also see to that the annual meeting be announced at least two months before it convenes.

8. The annual meeting elects a Committee on Organization, consisting of three members. Each year a member is elected to serve for three years.

9. *(a)* The Committee on Organization works for making the Principles and Rules of the Free Church better known and discussed in the congregations, so that the task of the Free Church can, in an ever-increasing degree, be more clearly understood and better done.

(b) It works for having the congregations as fully and generally represented as possible in the annual meeting of the Free Church.

(c) It arranges for the holding of larger meet-

ings and decides as to the time, the place, the program and the speakers for such meetings.

(*d*) The committee endeavors to bring about a general reciprocation of the spiritual factors in the congregations.

(*e*) It will, where desired, give congregations and ministers counsel and guidance.

(*f*) Each year it collects and submits to the annual meeting as complete data as possible with regard to the work of the Free Church in its various branches, such as the Congregational Work, the Home and Foreign Missions, Sunday School, Women's Auxiliaries, Young People's Societies, Church buildings, Church dedications, etc.

10. The annual meeting elects each year an Ordinator, who shall aid the congregations in ordaining candidates in theology who have been duly called as ministers.

11. The annual meeting likewise elects a Superintendent of Home Missions, who shall devote his whole time to the service of the Home Missions and aid the Board of Home Missions in arranging the Home Missions activities. He is elected for three years, and his salary is determined by the Board of Home Missions.

12. The annual meeting elects a Board of School Directors for Augsburg Seminary, and nominates members of Lutheran Board of Missions, Board of Home Missions, Augsburg Seminary Corporation,

and Board of Trustees of Augsburg Seminary.

13. The President, the Secretary, the Ordinator, and presidents of permanent committees, cannot be re-elected for more than two consecutive terms of office.

14. At the annual meetings of the Free Church, reports are given by the Committee on Organization, Lutheran Board of Missions, Board of Home Missions, and Augsburg Seminary, and by committees appointed by the annual meeting of the Free Church, and by such ecclesiastical institutions as the annual meeting gives permission to present reports.

15. These rules can be altered by the following procedure: A motion to make an alteration is presented in an annual meeting and is voted upon in the subsequent annual meeting; to pass this motion, two-thirds majority of all votes cast is necessary.

NOTE.—In preparing this article the author wishes to say he has made free use of the article on the Free Church, in Special Reports, Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1906, Part II., p. 392, which is based on a manuscript of Prof. Sverdrup, written in 1907, and published posthumously in Professor G. Sverdrup's "Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg.," I., pp. 229 ff. Minneapolis, 1909. Use has also been made of Prof. A. Helland's "Den lutherske Frikirke og dens Fällesgjöremaal," prepared for the Centennial Exposition in Norway, 1914.

The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

By REV. PROF. P. S. VIG

IN order rightly to understand Danish Church work and Danish Church life in America, it is necessary to know something of the Church in Denmark, its divisions, confessional basis, etc., because these things are found, and naturally so, among the Danes in America, and is the reason why the Danish Lutherans here are divided into two church bodies. The Lutheran Church in Denmark, known since 1849 as "The Danish National Church," as it is called in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark of said year, dates back to 1536, when Christian III became King of Denmark, and with the consent of the representatives of the people abolished the Roman Catholic Church and introduced Lutheran doctrine and worship. From 1536 till 1849 the Lutheran Church was the only church tolerated in the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, united under the same government till 1814, being in fact governed by the state, the king being its

supreme head. "In the Danish Law of Christian the Fifth" (1683), the confessional basis of the Danish Church is stated as follows: "That religion alone is allowed in the kingdoms and lands of the king, which is in accordance with Holy Scripture, the Apostolical, Nicene and Athanasian Symbols and the unaltered Augsburg Confession, delivered in 1530—and Luther's Smaller Catechism." The other Lutheran Confessions have not been adopted by the Danish Church.

The University of Copenhagen (reorganized as a Lutheran University in 1536) is the only training school for ministers in Denmark, and graduates from the University only can be ordained as ministers of the Danish Church, as a rule. "The Danish Church Ritual," of 1685, gives in its eleven chapters rules for church services and the administration of the sacraments, churching of women, visitation of the sick, the afflicted, the possessed, prisoners and criminals, the excommunicated, marriage, burials and ordination of bishops and ministers. The Ritual has been changed in many points, but is still in force.

"The Danish Altarbook" (Liturgy) of 1688, with the learned and beautiful preface by Dr. Hans Bagger, then Bishop of Zealand, gives the prescribed collects, epistles and gospel text for each Sunday and festival of the church year, stated prayers for several occasions, forms for the admin-

istration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, confirmation, marriage and burial, also the history of the passion of our Lord and Saviour. New texts have been prescribed for alternate years, also new forms for administration of the sacraments, marriage and confirmation. The authorized hymnbooks of Denmark are at present "The Roskilde Konvent Hymnbook," of 1855, with two appendices, and the "Hymnbook for Church and Home," of 1897. Hymnbook for Church and Home contains 675 hymns with index and list of authors with biographies. Its second part contains collects, two lists of epistles and gospels and prayers for church and home, the seven penitential psalms, etc.

The authorized text-books in religious instruction in the Danish common schools are: Bishop C. V. Balslev's Luther's Smaller Catechism with an explanation—a text-book for the unconfirmed youth.

Same: Bible History—with some church history. Most Danes in America, especially of the older generation, are well acquainted with the hymnbook and have learned Balslev's book by heart before they were confirmed; it would be a shame not to know one's catechism by heart.

So much as to the confessional inheritance of the Danish Lutherans in America.

The most influential parties of the Church of Denmark at present might, to use English party names, be designated as the High Church party, the

Low Church and Broad Church parties, but those names do not mean the same in Danish as in English. *"The High Church party,"* consisting mostly of the disciples of Mynster and Martensen, lays great emphasis on the Danish National Church, its ritual, law and order, and is skeptical, if not inimical, towards all new movements and measures, if not from without, then from below.

The Low Church in Denmark is better known as The Inner Mission Movement, a voluntary association of pastors and laymen whose aim is to stir up and awaken the great masses of the Church, and oppose the work of the different sects who have been busy in Denmark since 1849, when the new Constitution granted liberty of worship. The Inner Mission movement was begun among Christian laymen who started a small paper and sent out a single colporteur with religious tracts. The movement was saved from becoming a sect in opposition to the Church by the venerable pastor, C. F. Ronne (died 1890), who was admitted to the association, not as a pastor, but as a Christian. He succeeded in gaining as members some younger ministers, among them Vilhelm Beck (1829-1901), one of the most remarkable workers and leaders in the Church of Denmark in the nineteenth century. He had the laymen's association reorganized (1861) as "The Church Association for Inner Mission in Denmark." As editor of the small weekly, *Inner Mis-*

sion Tidende, and president of the association, Pastor Beck has had a powerful influence on Danish Church life, and as preacher of the gospel he had few equals.

The third powerful party in the Danish Church, the Broad Church party, if you please, is made up of the followers of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), one of the mightiest and most peculiar personalities that ever lived on Danish soil, a great poet, philosopher, historian, warm patriot and powerful speaker in church, school and folk meetings, a peculiar visionary and a hymn writer of the first rank, a giant worker, whose writings, lectures and pamphlets run up into the hundreds. Grundtvig's influence in Denmark is felt everywhere, and will be for generations to come, and *decidedly* so. His influence upon Danish Church life has been great, from 1810, as the fiery antagonist of Rationalism, since 1825 as propagator of his peculiar view of the so-called Apostles' Creed as a living word of the Lord's mouth, inseparably connected with baptism; in fact, in itself the baptismal covenant, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken without risking salvation. The Apostles' Creed, having always been the condition *sine qua non* of baptism, is the true mark of the Christian Church, the standard of all true Christians, while Holy Scripture, whose inspiration he admits, being younger than the Church, is written for the edification, guidance

and direction of Christians in all times. But in itself Scripture is dead and powerless, while the Lord's word (*i. e.,* The Apostles' Creed in Baptism) is not only living but life-creating.

In other words, Grundtvig sets tradition above Holy Scripture, the formal principle of the Christian Church. He was convinced that he was at one with Luther, continuing the Reformation that Luther commenced, and always confessed himself a faithful son of Luther. There is no doubt that few, if any, had drunk deeper of the fountain of Holy Scripture than Grundtvig; its language was always in his mind when he wrote or spoke, as every reader of his hymns and sermons knows. Grundtvig's followers always style themselves "The Danish Christians," or, "The Churchly Party." Danish is almost a part of their religion, and as they claim to have the only *true* mark of the Church of Christ, it is no wonder they call themselves churchly.

Danish emigration to the United States dates back to about 1840, and especially after 1850, when the Mormon propaganda brought many deluded Danes to Zion by the Great Salt Lake of Utah, where thousands of them are to be found to-day. A great many of the first Danish Baptists became Mormons, the first Mormons in Denmark.

The first Danish Lutheran mission among the Danes in America commenced in 1871, about a generation too late, and after the Baptists, Adven-

tists, etc., had reaped a rich harvest among Danish immigrants.

No theological candidate from the University of Copenhagen had the heart to come to America to administer the means of grace to his countrymen. Two laymen were sent over by a voluntary committee in Denmark, which defrayed their traveling expenses and promised to have young men educated to come over and help them when needed. One of the two was ordained in 1871, the other went to a Norwegian Lutheran seminary in Wisconsin and was ordained in 1872. At the same time two Danish missionaries, one from India and one from Africa, came over as pastors to Danish congregations in Wisconsin. In 1872 an association of the Danish pastors was formed and a church and mission paper started. Some years afterwards two or three theological candidates came over and worked among the Danes in Illinois, Michigan and Iowa. In 1878 "The Danish Church in America" was organized and adopted its first constitution. The above named committee in Denmark was composed of Grundtvigians, most of the candidates sent to America had been educated in Grundtvigian schools, consequently their work in America was along Grundtvigian lines. Later on, when some non-Grundtvigians were ordained ministers in the Danish Church, it became evident that it was impossible for the different parties to work together in harmony, differing

as they were about the formal principle of the Church. For several years a warm fight about Holy Scriptures raged in the church papers and at different meetings. Finally, in 1894, the Danish Church split in two, the followers of Grundtvig, the majority, remaining where they were while the minority of the ministers and congregations formed a union under the name of "The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America," and started a theological seminary at Elk Horn, Iowa, where a high school had been founded in 1878.

In 1896 that body united with "The Danish Evangelical Association of America," a church body of Danes that had been organized in 1884, and was composed of Danish pastors and congregations who had been members of The Norwegian Danish Church Conference. The newly-formed church body took the name "The United Danish Evangelical Church in America."

It has its theological seminary and pro-seminary at Blair, Neb., founded in 1886, and its Publishing House at the same place.

The United Church has its ministers and congregations from New York to San Francisco, and from Indian Territory to Canada, none of the congregations being very large, most of them both small and poor. It has six missionaries among the heathen, two among the Indians in Indian Territory and four in Japan. One of its pastors is doing mis-

sionary work among the Mormons in Salt Lake City.

The Language.

We naturally use the Danish language in our pulpits and schools because it is the language of our homes and of our books and papers. We do not make Danish an article of our creed, nor do we consider it a burden to be cast off as soon as possible, but we use it as a means for our church work to reach our people. We do not consider the English language our enemy, nor as a mark of higher civilization and culture. We use it in our churches and Sunday schools and colleges, and we believe that it will be the future language of our Church. But we do not consider it expedient to hasten that future in an unnatural way. Language is expression of thought and mind, and as such one of the finest instruments known and associated with customs and views so deep that nobody ought to forget that change of language means change of so many other important things and will take place very slowly.

Our Doctrinal Standpoint.

1. We adhere unflinchingly to Holy Scripture as the word of God, the supreme judge of doctrine and life, faith and practice, the means of our salvation and the only sure guide for the people of God in the world. Whatever is in conformity with the word of God is of God, and whatever conflicts with

that rule must be avoided. We hold that the Bible was not the word of God when it was written only, but it is the word of God to-day and forever.

2. We adhere to the confessional books of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan and Athanasian Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530, and Luther's Smaller Catechism, as the living voice of the true Church of God at all times, and the connecting link between us and the Church in which we were born and reared, and we will not let go of these moorings, because they lead us to the word of God and thereby to God and His people.

3. We unflinchingly adhere to the material principle of our Lutheran Church, justification of grace alone, through Christ alone, by faith alone, as the only hope for sinful man, the only sure foundation for the Christian Church, and the capital motive for a Christian life, and we consider it as our main social service in a dying world to preach and inculcate that gospel by all our means to Greeks and barbarians, the wise and the unwise.

Our Practice.

1. Our congregations are independent and self-governing in their own affairs. The Conference cannot command them nor force them. To be admitted as members of our Church body they must

adopt a constitution in conformity with our confession and send an application for membership to the annual conference. If admitted, each congregation has a right to send a representative for each fifty members to the annual meeting. All our institutions, schools, orphan homes, missions, etc., are upheld by voluntary contributions from our congregations.

2. Our Church is first and foremost a preaching Church. Our people want to hear the word of God preached not only on Sundays at our stated services, but also on weekdays. Bible readings, young people's meetings, meetings for Home Missions, etc.

Our pastors preach more, work more and get a smaller salary than most other Lutheran pastors in the world. Our church people hear more and work more than most other Lutherans in the world.

3. While we are opposed to secret oathbound societies, we have no clause in our constitutions prohibiting members of such societies from becoming members of our Church. It is not necessary, for we have but few applications from those quarters, and we do not consider them as worse sinners than other sinners. We do not want to prevent their families and children from being with us, and we know that most of our people have entered such societies to get help in times of need and not because they wanted to get away from their church and God. We do not want to waste our time in fighting

windmills, because we have better and more important things to do.

4. We do not exchange pulpits with preachers of other churches, but we willingly take every opportunity to preach the truth as it is in Christ, where such is offered us. We do not teach our people that mere consent to orthodox doctrine is saving, nor that salvation depends on ever so many negatives. We want every man to know and to show that he is a Christian, not because we say so, but because the word of God says so and the Spirit of God testifies to that fact. All who are in Christ ought to work for Christ, each according to what he has and is.

5. We want our children and youth taught and instructed in the doctrine of our Church. We, therefore, have not Sunday schools only, but also summer schools. Most of our congregations have such from six to eight weeks every summer, and our future preachers are school teachers, in Danish or English, as the case may be; as yet mostly in Danish. We are very sorry to see that our English Lutheran brethren do not seem to care much for that most important factor in the work of our Church. Our children are our best Christians, and they have a right to ask us to give them the unadulterated milk of the word that they may grow thereby. This, indeed, is social service, and there is a crying need for it everywhere.

6. We want a Bible in every home of our Church body, and we want it opened every day, that the word of God may shine as a light in a dark place, and we are glad to say that in a great many homes the word of God is read daily, and our many devotional books, from Luther down, are found in many home libraries and studied by our people. We do not want the home church abolished by our public meetings, but we want it to flourish and grow. The public preaching of the word ought to lead to private reflection of it and will do so where its necessity is emphasized as it ought to be by every true Lutheran preacher. We want our people educated, but never educated away from the public and private use of the word of God, for that means death both to our people and our Church.

Concluding Reflections.

1. Our mission field is very large and promising, but also very hard. The Danes in America are scattered far and wide over this great country. The working class in Denmark, greatly influenced by Socialism, is inimical to the Church as the stay of the possessing classes and the support of wealth, and holding the people in thraldom of the rich. Many of the emigrants from Denmark now, who are not inimical to the Church, have been influenced by un-Lutheran liberalism, so called, not recognizing any authority but their own fallible judgment.

Materialism is setting in upon our people in America from every side, and of the most different forms, and the English-speaking churches, even of the Lutheran Church, are trying to entice away from us our children and youth, and we have few men and small means to the great work before us.

2. Still we are not despairing, and have no reason to be, for we know that our work in the Lord is never in vain. Riches and greatness have always been poison to the Church, and are so to-day. The poor preachers have always been the best preachers, and the poor church has always been the best working church and brought home the richest harvest to the Lord's granary. If we be poor, our Lord is rich, and it is His will that His gospel shall be preached to the poor. His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

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